

THE
Mourners Companion:
OR,
Funeral DISCOURSES
ON
Several Texts.

BY
JOHN SHOWER.

ECCL. vii. 2.

*It is better to go the House of Mourning,
than to go to the House of Feasting, for that
is the End of all Men, and the Living will
lay it to heart.*

LONDON,

Printed by J. A. for J. Dutton at the Raven
in the Poultry, and A. Chandler at the
Chyrurgeons Arms at the Entrance into Bar-
tholomews-Close in Aldersgate-street, 1692.

Monitors Companion

EPIS TLE

Funeral DISCOURSES

ON

Several Texts

BY

JOHN SHOWER

ESQ. LL. D.

is intended to be read at the funeral of the late
Rev. John A. D. D. at the funeral of the late
Rev. John A. D. D. at the funeral of the late
Rev. John A. D. D. at the funeral of the late

REV. JOHN A. D. D.

Printed by A. A. for J. D. D. at the
in the House of Representatives at the
at the House of Representatives at the
at the House of Representatives at the

THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

TWill be generally granted that
Funeral Discourses are more
like to affect than ordinary Sermons,
because of the fresh Instances and Ex-
amples, which give occasion to 'em.
If the matter be Instructive and Awa-
kening, Practical, and Serious, they
may be of singular Advantage to the
Relations and Acquaintance of the De-
ceased; and of some unto other Rea-
ders, because the Living know that
they shall dye. I am not without
Hope that these may be of some use to the
Friends and Relatives, at least, of the

The Epistle

Deceased Persons. This is sufficient to satisfy me, whatever Censures I may incur, that I do well to publish 'em.

I know this Nation abounds with good Books of practical Divinity, beyond any other in the World, and I rejoyce in it. Methinks it ought to be a real Pleasure to a Good Man, to see the various Editions of some plain, practical useful Books, because we may conclude that there are many thousands in England who relish and read such Books, or so many would never sell.

It might be expected, that I should have said somewhat more particular of the Person, whose Death occasion'd the first Discourse. Her Acquaintance may think many things Praise-worthy in her Character, and Conversation, will accuse my silence. But my Relation and Affection, according to the common Custom and Usage of the Word, made it unfit for
me;

To the Reader.

me: (and my Brother Spademan by his Funeral Sermon, which is here added, hath made it now less needful;) tho I must say, that Custom hath this Inconvenience attending it, that the only way almost by which we can attain to the true Knowledge of any Persons Character, is thereby becomes an Argument against the publishing it.

I shall only request of him that Reads, as a Friend who desires thy Salvation, as ever thou hopest for the Comforts of a Dying man, or wilt answer it to God and Conscience at last, that thou learn by these Discourses, to Retire now and then, seriously to bethink thy self of thy own Death; which is as certain as the Death of any of those, whose Funeral thou hast attended, or whose Funeral Sermon thou hast heard or read: And beg of God the Wisdom to consider thy Latter End, and Prepare to follow: And then be
true

To the Reader.

true to God, and thy own Conscience, resolutely to Act and Live in that manner, that such thoughts shall suggest to be wisest and most necessary. Do not refuse or deny me this, as thou wilt answer it to thy Judge, who may summon thee before his Bar in an hour which thou thinkest not of.
Farewell.

J. S.

THE

To the Reader.

THE CONTENTS.

Disc. 1. **O**f Mourning for the Dead, from
Ezek. 24. 16. *Son of Man, I
will take away the Desire of thine Eyes with
a stroke, and thou shalt not mourn, nor weep, nei-
ther shall thy tears run down. Since enlarged.*

Disc. 2. Prepare to Follow, from Mat. 24.
44. *Therefore, Be you also Ready* — In
two Sermons.

Disc. 3. The Saints Desire to be with Christ,
from Phil. 1. 23. *I desire to be dissolved,
and to be with Christ, which is far Bes-
ter.*

Disc. 4. Sickneſs and Death for the Glory
of Christ, from John 11. 4. *This Sick-
neſs is not unto Death, but for the Glory of
God, that the Son of Man may be glorified
thereby.*

The

THE CONTENTS

The Reader is desired to correct a few
of the most considerable *Errata*.

Page 8. l. ult. r. *imbuuntur* p. 92. l. 21. after *hinc*
r. *ex* p. 40. l. 7. *an* p. 43. l. 29. for
Chang r. *Chane*, m. p. 46. l. 28. for *Diseas* r. *Dicass*,
p. 61. l. ult. for *deca* r. *decima*, p. 63. l. ult. for *Know-*
ledge of God r. *Divine Life*.

Page 4. *Sickness and Death for the Glory*
of Christ from John 11. 4. *John 11. 4.*
note it was not John but for the glory
of God, that the Son of Man was to glorify
himself.

OF
MOURNING
FOR THE
D E A D :
OR, A
DISCOURSE
FROM

EZEK. 24. 16, 17, 18.

Son of Man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down: Forbear to try, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of Men: So I spoke unto the people in the morning, and at even my Wife dyed: —

By JOHN SHOWER.

Being the first Sermon he Preacht after the Death of his Wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Shower: Who departed this Life Aug. 24. 1691.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. Dunton and A. Chandler. 1691.

Of Mourning for the Dead.

How far allowable, &c.

FROM

EZEK. 24. 16, 17, 18.

Sort of Man, behold, I take away from thee the Desire of thine Eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy Tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no Mourning for the Dead, bind the Tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy Shoes upon thy Feet, and cover not thy Lips, and eat not the bread of Men. So I spake unto the People in the Morning, and at Even my Wife dyed. —

Considering what I have Formerly preach't and publish't for the Assistance of other Mourners, you will easily believe, that since the late Providence

A 2

which

which occasions this Discourse, that passage of *Eliphaz*, to *Job* hath often been suggested to me, *Chap. 4. v. 3, 4, 5. Behold thou hast instructed many, and hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees: But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.* Thro' the Mercy of God, I hope, I do not murmur or faint; but should it be thought strange, that I am *Troubled*, when the Desire of mine Eyes is removed by a sudden stroke? Would it not be faulty and provoking to be otherwise affected? to disregard the Hand of God? despise his Chastening? or be unconcerned at the Voice of his Rod? How far, and how long, and to what degree to mourn, I confess, is a matter of some Difficulty; to keep within the Christian limits, so as neither to offend God, nor lay a Stumbling-block before the less judicious, or less candid Observers. And of like difficulty is it, rightly to understand and use the proper grounds of support under such an Exercise. For Experience will attest, that divers things are wont to be offer'd for our Relief in such cases, that will by no means administer it, but are weak and ineffectual to any such Purpose. Tho' thanks be to God the Gospel doth not leave us destitute of sufficient Instructions, to direct our Mourning, to regulate our Funeral Sorrows, and sustain our Souls in an

hum-

humble submissive Adoration of the Divine Good Pleasure. Some of these I shall endeavour to recollect, after I have considered the extraordinary Instance of this Text; where we find the Prophet *Ezekiel* is forbidden by God to mourn for the death of his Wife; having receiv'd an express order not to testifie his Affection by any of the Funeral Rites, and Customs of Mourning, used among the Jews on the like Occasion. *Also the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, behold, I take away from thee the Desire of thine Eyes with a stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy Tears run down: —*

For the better understanding of this Passage, you must know, that this Prophet had for several years publish't the orders of God, and denounc'd Judgments in his Name unto *Judah* and *Jerusalem*; but without the desired fruit of his Ministry, without the success of his important Messages and Commission. The generality of the People applauded his Rhetorick, but continued to do after the Lusts of their Hearts, and the sight of their Eyes; and would not hearken to his repeated Calls to Repentance; or be awaken'd by the most awfull Threatnings of approaching Calamity. Hereupon God resolves to take another Method, and try if his Sufferings would not be instructive unto those to whom his Preaching had been little

so. The *Prophet* himself should be a *Sign* unto 'em : and the surprizing Death of his Wife be made a Warning of what God would do against that Nation. And his not being permitted to mourn for her, should signifie the (a) Extremity of that Judgment, which would quickly overtake them : and represent the Horror of their Distress, that they should not have leave, or opportunity to perform Funeral Rites, or make a regular mourning for their Dead Relations. The following part of the Chapter declares this to be the general scope and meaning of this Passage.

Wherein we may consider, *First*, The *Liter*al Sence of the words, in relation to this Prophet. *Secondly*, The *Parab*olical meaning of them in relation to the People of the Jews. *Thirdly*, The *Pract*ical Improvement of this Instance, as to *Ordinary Cases* of the Death of Relations, and Mourning for 'em. The former will tell us what these Expressions signifie in themselves : the Second what they were designed by God to represent to the Jews ; which will make way for what may be instructive from both, whenever God takes away the Desire of our Eyes, by Sickness, or any other stroke.

(a) *Uxorem nolo lugeas, ut significet in maximis malis non vacaturum Ipsi ut lugeant.* Grotius.

Under the *First Enquiry* we may take notice of three things. 1. The Title here given to the Prophet, *Son of Man*. 2. The Calamity threatned, *Behold, I take away the Desire of thine Eyes with a stroke*. 3. The Prohibition in that case, *not to mourn or weep*, or use the ordinary Expressions of Funeral Sorrow.

First, This Title, of *Son of Man*, we find given him almost an hundred times in this Prophecy. That it should be given him as a Type of Christ, who is so often called *the Son of Man*, I know no sufficient reason to prove, for that Appellation seems to have respect to his Mediatory Office, as that true Son of Man, or promised Seed, who was to bruise the Serpents head; and not only to be the Saviour of *Israel*, but a light to the Gentiles, and allied unto all Mankind: *Unto whom all Power and Authority is given, and all Judgment Committed, because he is the Son of Man*, Joh. 5. It may either referr to his mean Original and frailty, as a *Son of Adam*; (whose Body was formed out of the dust of the ground, and must return to it; which might help to prevent his being lifted up by the extraordinary Visions and Revelations God had favour'd him with:) that he might not think of himself above what was meet; 2 Cor. 12. 7. or count it strange, that he should be called to so difficult a Service, and prov'd by such an af-

flitting Stroke, since he was but a Son of Adam. Or the expression may (b) import no more but simply *O man*, which is usual in all Languages, when a Superior directs his discourse to an Inferior. So Rom. 9. 20.

Secondly, N. The Calamity threatned by God, *I take away the Desire of thine eyes with a stroke*. By a Plague, or Apoplexy, or some very surprizing more immediate Hand of God; such as the First-born of the Egyptians were smitten with, Exod. 12. 29. where the word is used, *The Desire*, or * *Desires of thine Eyes*, as the Septuagint Translation renders it; who this was the eighteenth verse tells us. *So I spake unto the people in the morning, and at Even my Wife dyed*. 'Tis manifestly supposed that she had many qualifications to render her Desireable, and make the loss exceedingly afflictive: otherwise the dreadful Calamity that was coming upon the Jews would not have been properly represented by it. If the Spirit of God had not reckon'd this Instance to have been one of the most smarting and afflictive of all private and particular losses, it could not have been fitly made use of here. If the loss of a tender Parent, or of a beloved Child, or any other Relation, had been superior or equal to this,

(b) Cameronis Prelect. ad 16 Matth. 27.

* Τὸ ἐπιθυμητὸν ὁφθαλμῶν.

the death of some or other of those Relations would rather have been mention'd instead of this.

It may therefore be thought reasonable, that when the Inferiour Priests were forbidden under the Law to *defile themselves for the Dead*, save only for their nearest kindred, *Levit. 21. 3, 4.* that the *Wife* must be comprehended, tho' not express'd. Allowance being given them to mourn for a Father or Mother, a Brother or Sister, a Son or Daughter, this Relation is much more supposed, for whose sake a Man is to leave all others. It were needless to tell him, he might afflict himself in that case, when it is granted as to the lesser, and more remote Relatives. The Margin of some Bibles would intimate it was forbidden unto a Priest, being an Husband among his People, to defile himself by Funeral Mourning for his *Wife*; but it may better be read, He shall not defile himself for a *Chief man* or Magistrate, among his People, therefore much less might he do so for any other, save his nearest Kindred and Relations. The general reason of such (c) a Prohibition seems to have been, to keep up the Reputation and Respect due to the Sacred Office and Ministry, which by being ordinarily pre-

(c) Dr. Spencer *de Ritibus Jud. lib. I. cap. 7. §. 2.*

sent at Funeral Solemnities, might have been lessen'd: that he might not, (being a publick person, and employed about the worship of God) by any sorrowful indecorous Ceremonies disparage his Office, or lessen his Dignity, and esteem among the people; for it follows, *v. 6. They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the Name of God.* i. e. They are peculiarly separated for the service of God, and the Offices of Religion, and obliged to greater strictness and Purity than others; it doth not therefore become *them* to do as others on the like occasions, lest the honour of God's Name and Worship should by that means be abated: For all that were employed about, or assisted at Funerals, by the Ceremonial Law must needs be *Unclean*; not only by touching a dead Body, but abiding in the same House, or eating of the Funeral Banquet, &c. *Num. 19* So that if the Priests had been allowed to be ordinarily present at Funerals, and comply with the usual Rites and Customs of Mourning, they must either neglect their Sacred Work, or perform some part of it with polluted hands. And because the Unclean were not to converse with others, till after their purification, this would have been a publick Inconvenience to the People, unto whom by their Office they were to be serviceable on all occasions. Upon the like reason it is required of the *Nazarites*, or such as separated themselves

selves to the Lord by a Vow, *Num. 6. 6, 7.* He should not make himself unclean, nor not for his kindred, if they dye. The Service of God to which he was so particularly devoted, was to be prefer'd before any Expressions of his Affection to his own Relations. And doubtless so far as these Testimonies of our Love to deceased Relatives would hinder us from, or in, our Sacred work, even *Ministers* under the Gospel are obliged to endeavour to deny themselves. Which is the principal ground of my not desisting from preaching as formerly, any longer than my imperfect health obliged me to.

Thirdly, Here is a Prohibition of Mourning, according to the usual expressions of Funeral Sorrow. *First,* It is more generally laid down. *Secondly,* by an Enumeration of some of the most solemn Rites used by the Jews on such occasions. *Bind the Tyre of thine head upon thee, put on thy Shoes upon thy feet, cover not thy Lips, and eat not the bread of Mourners.*

First, The Prohibition is express'd in more general Terms: *Thou shalt not mourn, or weep, or let thy Tears run down: forbear to cry, make no mourning for the Dead.* Tho' some of the (d) Heathens refused to make solemn Mourning for their Dead, yet many of them in the Neighbourhood of *Judea*, were very extra-

(d) *Valer. Max. l. 2. c. 6.*

vagant and Superstitious in such things. And the Jews, too apt to imitate the Pagan Rites, are often reprov'd on that account, and have many particular Institutions of their Law to prevent their symbolizing with the Gentiles, *Lev.* 19. 27. *Chap.* 21. 5. *Deut.* 14. 1, 2. &c. And some of the Heathen being immoderate in their *Sorrow* for the *Dead*, may probably be referr'd to, in those Laws of God by *Moses*, which make the persons to be *unclean*, who touch'd a dead Body, or came into the House, &c. God would put such a note upon it, the better to keep up their Faith, and Hope of the *Resurrection* of the *Dead*, which the Custom of excessive Mourning might by degrees have lessen'd.

The time of Mourning among the Jews was sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, according to the Dignity and Quality of the Person deceas'd. We read of Mourning for the *Dead*, ordinarily *seven days*, and sometimes for a month, or *thirty days*. Among the (e) *Egyptians* for *seventy days*, among the (f) *Perfians* *seven*. Among the *Romans* the time of Mourning ordinarily last'd but

Gen. 50. 10.
Deut. 21. 13.
Num. 20. 29.
Deut. 34. 8.
1 Sam. 31. ult.

(e) *Diod. Sic.* l. 2. c. 3. 5. *Gen.* 50. c. 3. (f) *Herberts Travels.* l. 2. p. 238. For the time and manner of Mourning among the Jews, see *Buxtorf.* of *Synag.* Jud. c. 29. *Steph. Menochio, Economia Christiana.* l. 8. c. 2. *Schickardi Jus Regium Hebr.* c. 6. theor. 19. *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* l. 4. c. 8. *Dr. Lightfoot* in *Matth.* 19. 23. & *Joh.* 11. 19. 2d. Vol.

Nine

Nine Days; as appears by their *Novendial*, or *Nine Days Sacrifices*; which they offered to the *Manes* or Ghosts of the Dead: Tho' (e) some of them continued it longer, for *Ten Months*, or a Year; which time, on many particular Occasions, was to be contracted, and afterwards was left to Discretion and Inclination.

But faith God, *Thou shalt not Mourn, or WEEP.* The word signifies Weeping with lifting up the Voice. He must not vent his Sorrow, or ease his Heart by Tears, or Sighs, or Cries: For it follows, *Forbear to Cry, make no Mourning for the Dead.* i. e. Do not Lament, and Sigh, or lift up thy Voice; but restrain and curb thy Sorrows, and all the ordinary Expressions of them. There were solemn mourning Lamentations among the Jews: Thus for *Josiah*, 2 Chron. 35. 24. It is threatned against *Jehojachim*, That they should not lament for him, when he died, Jer. 22. 18. saying, *Ah! my Brother!* And the contrary promised as a Favour to *Zedekiah*, Jer. 34. 5. The first solemn Lamentation, or Cry, was at the Closing of the Eyes, by those who had assisted the Deceased, during that last Sicknes: And then by those Relations, unto whom the first News came of such

(e) *Rosin. Antiq. Rom. l. 5. c. 39.* Polyd Virgil, de *Justis Parental. l. 6. c. 9, 10.*

a Person's Death. They lift up their Voice, and with Cries and Tears repeated several times the Name of the Deceased. Thus did *David*, when he received the Tydings of *Absalom's* Death: *O my Son, Absalom! my Son, my Son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom my Son, my Son!* 2 Sam. 18. 33. There was likewise a Solemn Lamentation before the Burial, in the presence of the dead Body, or before the Effigies of it, exposed in a publick place: Which is called, Mourning *over* the Dead. This the Jews should not be allowed, saith God, concerning their own Children *slain by the Sword*, Ver. 23. of this Chapter.

It was also (f) customary to hire Persons on purpose, who were to act the part of Mourners, artificially to express, and to excite to Sorrow; to provoke and assist Grief, by their Lamentations, and Funeral Songs. Such we read of, *Jer.* 9. 17. under the Name of the *Mourning Women*, and *Cunning Women*, and such as are skilful of Lamentation, *Amos* 5. 16. By mournful Postures and Actions, tearing their Hair, and beating their Breasts, forcing Tears, and by doleful Tunes assisting the Sorrow of the Mourning Relations. These Lamentations were often in Verse; in-

(f) *Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 3. c. 15.* *Bellonius de Mendicato luctu.* Such Women hired to lament at Funerals the Greeks also had. *Plato de Leg. Dial. 7.*

so much that what we translate to *Lament* and *Wail*, in divers Passages may be rendred to *Sing*, Ezek. 32. 18. Mic. 2. 4. &c. So *David* wept over *Jonathan* and *Saul*, and lamented over them, 2 Sam. 1. 18. and bad them teach the Children of *Israel* the Use of the Bow: Which some will have to be a Musical Instrument, used on such Occasions; though it is more probable, that by the Use of the Bow, he meant to match the *Philistines* in Archery, and so to be avenged for *Saul's* Death; for by their Archery he was slain: Or in general, the Use of the *Philistines* Arms, whereof the Bow was one of the Chief: and in that Song *Jonathan* is commended for his Dexterity in it: Because in the *Old Testament* we read of no Musical Instruments made use of in Mourning; but 'twas ordinary among the *Gentiles*, of whom the *Jews* did afterwards learn it. (g) Accordingly we read of *Minstrels* in the Ruler's House, on the Death of his Daughter, Mar. 9. 23. Which Custom it is supposed the *Jews* had not, till after *Palestine* was subject to the *Roman Empire*.

Secondly, After the general Prohibition, there is an Enumeration of some particular Rites, which, among many others, were wont to be used in such Cases. Several of these are mentioned in Chap. 27. 29, 30, 31.

(g) See Dr. Lightfoot in Loc.

One of the ancient (*b*) Writers of the Church, in an Oration concerning the *Macchabees*, brings in their Mother refusing and disclaiming all the ordinary methods of Mourning for her Sons; among which, these in the Text are particularly named.

I. *Bind the tire of thine head upon thee.* The Expression of Grief and Sorrow, by the *Hair*, was different, according to what was the Custom of wearing it at other times. And therefore the *Jews*, who were accustomed to long Hair, and used to tie it up in the Form of a Crown or Mitre; not only for Ornament, but Covering, (*i*) either let it hang loose, in a time of Mourning, after a careless neglected manner; or pluck'd off a good part of it, or caus'd it to be shaven. And having made their Heads bare in deep Mourning, did sometimes throw * *Ashes* upon their Heads; which, mingling with their Tears, disfigur'd their Countenance, and gave it a rueful Aspect. Thus *Job*, upon the News of his Childrens Death,

* Job. 2. 12.
Joth. 7. 6.
2 Sam. 1. 2.
Nehem. 9. 1.
Lam. 2. 10.

(*b*) ἢ σπασσέμενος κόρυν, &c. Non comam laniabo; non vestes scindam; non carnes unguibus lacerabo; non lacrimis excitabo; non lacrimis socias accersam; non tenebras concludam; ut ipse quoque aer mecum lugeat; non consolatores expectabo; non Panem Lugubrem apponam. Greg. Nazianzen. 22 Orat. in Macchab. laudem.

(*i*) Sopranis in Davidem Commentar. Digress. 1. de re Vestiaria Jud. Diss. 2. Et Digr. 2. de publ. & priv. Lucian. Mercer. in Job 1. 20.

shaved

shaved his Head, or caused his Hair to be cut off, Chap. 1. 20. But because the Jews were forbidden to imitate the *Heathen* (k) in rounding the corners of their Heads, &c. *Ezra*, as a Testimony of his Sorrow, only pluck'd off some of the Hair of his Head, and of his Beard, Chap. 9. 3. Thus the Leper was obliged to make bare his Head, Lev. 13. 43. Hence is † Baldness † Lev. 10. 6. so often joyn'd with Mourning Ezek. 7. 18. and Weeping. Jer. 16. 6. Cut off thine Hair, Chap. 41. 5. O Jerusalem! cast it away, and take up a Lamentation—Jer. 7. 29. for the Lord hath rejected, and forsaken thee. The like Amos 8. 10. I will turn your Songs into Lamentations: I will bring Baldness upon every Head, and will make it as the mourning for an only Son. So Mic. 1. 16. O Judea, and Israel! make thee Bald, and poll thee, for thy delicate Children: enlarge thy Baldness as the Eagle, for they are gone into Captivity. Tear off thy Hair, or shave it, and make thy Baldness greater than usual. As the Eagle, when she hath lost her Feathers, as at certain times they do, (l) unless some particular Kind of 'em, that is naturally Bald, be alluded to. But the Prophet is here forbidden to make himself Bald, or shave his Hair: Bind the tyre of thine head upon thee.

(k) Spencer. *Ib.* l. 2. c. 12, 13. *de lege Tonsuram Orbis. prohibente.*

(l) Bochart. *de Animal.* part. 2. l. 2. c. 1. See more of this Custom, Geier, *de Ebraeorum luctu.* c. 8. sect. 8.

II. *Put on thy Shoes upon thy Feet.* It was a Token of Sorrow to walk bare-foot : As *David*, when he fled from *Absalom*, and went up the ascent of *Mount Olivet*, 2 Sam. 15. 30. It was used at Funeral (m) Solemnities : And 'tis the Custom of the (n) Modern *Jews*, when they return from the Funeral of a near Relation, after having taken off their Shoes, to sit down on the Ground for Seven Days : But saith God to the Prophet, *Put on thy shoes upon thy feet.*

III. *And cover not thy Lips.* They were wont in deep Mourning to cover the Lip, the Mouth, and the Chin ; but especially the Upper-Lip. Sometimes the whole Head ; as when *David* wept, and went bare-foot, he also covered his Head. The covering of the Face may be meant by such an Expression. Thus we read, *Mic. 3. 7. The Seers shall be ashamed, and the Diviners shall be confounded ; they shall all Cover their Lips, because there is no Answer from God : because his Providence contradicted their lying Predictions.* So the *Lepers* were to cover their Lips ; not only to prevent the Contagion of their infectious Breath, but as a Sign of Mourning, *Lev. 13. 45. But cover not thy Lips, saith God to Ezekiel.*

(m) *Geir. Ib. c. 15.*

(n) *Cerem. & Cout. des Juifs d'aujourd'hui, p. 5. c. 9.*

IV. *Nor eat the Bread of Men*, or the Bread of Mourners, of afflicted, sorrowful Men, as the word signifies. It was customary among the Jews, to send in provisions to eat with the nearest Kindred and Relations of the deceased. It was designed for the solace and refreshment of the Mourners, who concern'd not themselves to get their own food, but had it thus sent home to 'em. Of this we read *Jer. 16. 7. Neither shall men tear themselves for them in Mourning*, or (it may be better rendred) *neither shall men break Bread for them in Mourning*, to comfort them; *neither shall men give them the Cup of Consolation to drink, for their Father, or Mother.* All manner of Food is express'd by Bread, and both the Food, and the Guests were all Unclean in such a case, *Lev. 19. 11, 14.* which the Prophet alludes to *Hos. 9. 4. Their Sacrifices shall be unto them, as the Bread of Mourners, all that eat thereof shall be polluted.* The (o) Jews in the *Levant*, and other places, do observe the like Custom to this day: and send in provisions to the House of Mourning, every Morning and Evening, for seven days together, and sometimes come and eat with them. Almost such a (p) Banquet is descri-

(o) *Cerem. & C. des Juifs, Sec. Ib. du Deuil.*

(p) *Tib. Catasteri Adversaria. c. 6.*

bed *Job* 42. 11. when *Job's* Kindred and Acquaintance came to eat bread with him, and to bemoan him. But saith God to this Prophet, Thou shalt not eat the Bread of Men, not taste of a Funeral Banquet, or the bread of Mourners, as is usual for others to do.

Accordingly, we find he did not Mourn, or weep, or shed a Tear, or lift up a Mourning cry, or cover his head, or put off his Shoes, or cover his Lips, or eat the Bread of Mourners, or drink the Wine of Consolation for the deceased, or express any token of Grief. But as he had acquainted the people, that this Calamity should befall him, and this should be his Department, the next morning, he tells them, it was actually come to pass, and that God had thus forbid him to mourn. Which being so unexpected and surprizing, could not but put them upon considering, what should be the meaning of so extraordinary a passage, v. 18. 19, 25, 26. *So I spake unto the people in the Morning, and at Even my Wife dyed, and I did as I was commanded. And the People said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us, what these things are to us, that thou doest so?* And then he tells them, what God would do against 'em, and how they should not be able to use the customary Rites of Mourning, no more than he: *Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign, v. 25. According to all that he hath done, shall you do: And when it comes to pass, you shall know that I*

am the Lord: for I will take from them their strength, the Joy of their Glory, the desire of their Eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their Sons and Daughters, &c.

II. Having consider'd the literal meaning of this passage, as to the Prophet, you must know, that how severe soever this stroke was to him, thus to lose the Desire of his Eyes, in that sudden and surprizing manner, it hath a *Typical, Parabolical* meaning; and was designed by God, not so much (if at all) as a Token of his Displeasure against the Prophet, as a sign of approaching Judgments on the *Jewish Nation*. It was usual with God to instruct this People, and the Ten Tribes, by parabolical Actions, and Examples, as well as by Verbal Messages, *Hos. 12. 10. I have spoken by my Prophets, I have multiplyed Visions, and I have used Similitudes by the Hands of the Prophets*, i. e. various Emblems, and Representations of my Mind, I have formerly given them: Instructive warnings of several sorts I have sent unto them. Thus the Prophet *Isaiah*, and his Sons were given for a *Sign and Wonder* to the House of *Israel*, from the Lord of Hosts, *Isa. 8. 8.* their very Names were Prophetical, and significative of future events, *Ch. 7. 3.* and *8. Ch. 3, 4.* Thus *Isaiah* walk'd barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder to *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, to represent the Captive miserable condition they

* 1 Sam. 19. 24.

2 Sam. 6. 20,

should be brought into, *Isa.* 20. 3. He went abroad without his upper Garments, after the manner of * Prisoners and Slaves, for men are said to be *naked* when they are ill clad, *Joh* 22. 6. we read of *stripping the naked of their cloathing*. Captives and Mourners are likewise wont to put off their upper Garments, 2 Sam. 15. 30. *Jer.* 2. 25. thus was he to walk for three years, to denote the duration of that Calamity.

This Prophet *Ezekiel* was likewise to give an Emblem of that Judgment the Text refers to, by the removal of his stuff, &c. *Chap.* 12. 15, 16, 17. digging through a Wall, as if a Watch had been set at the door, and all ordinary Passages block'd up: to signify the extremity of their distress, when every one will be willing to put a helping hand, He was to bear it on his shoulders, as Servants that carry Burdens, to represent the Servitude and Slavery to which the Jews should be reduc'd. And this in the Evening, or Twilight, to denote the stealing away of the King, Nobles, and Men of War, by Night, 2 Kings 25. 4. He was to cover his face, that he should not see the ground, as fill'd with shame, and unwilling to be known: thus was he to be a *Sign* unto the house of *Israel*: for the signification of this refers to them of *Jernsalem*, whose Desolation and Captivity was now at hand. Which Calamity,

ty, they, who were already Captives in *Babylon*, had escaped, v. 9. *This Burden concerned the Prince of Jerusalem, and of all the house of Israel, that were among them.* As the Prophet had done, so should it be done unto them. And accordingly it came to pass, for the King *Zedekiah* escap'd out of *Jerusalem* with a burden on his Shoulders, as if he were some common and ordinary Person, digging thro' a Wall, and escaping in the Twilight, but is taken by his Enemies, his Sons slain before his face, and his own eyes put out, and he is led into Captivity, and there remains a Prisoner till he Dies. In this was *Ezekiel* unto them a Sign.

He was so likewise by this passage in the Text, which was one of the last Prophetick warnings before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the last great Captivity of *Judah* and *Benjamin* by *Nebuchadnezzar* (q). It was within two years of it. And 'tis observable, that the tenth month, and the tenth day of the month, when this Prophet, (a Captive then in *Babylon*), received this Message from God, at the same time, the same day of the month, *Nebuchadnezzar* began to lay siege to *Jerusalem*. Within two years after this, is the

(q) See *Jos. Antiq. Jud.* l. 10. c. 10. *Jac. Vsseri Chronol. Sacra*, &c.

last great Captivity and Destruction of *Jerusalem*: the three hundred ninety days for the house of (r) *Israel*, mentioned *Ezek.* 4. 5. some think now to be Accomplished. (f) This was above a hundred and thirty years after the Destruction of *Samaria*, and the Ten Tribes, by *Salmanasser* King of *Assyria*. At the very time when the Siege began, he is told of it by God; and by the Parable of the death of his Beloved Wife, he informs the People of the approaching destruction of their City, and Temple, which was the Desire and Delight of their Eyes: For then God suffer'd the *Chaldeans* to defile and destroy the Temple, the Holy and Beautiful House, where their Fathers praised God, was burnt with Fire, and all their pleasant things laid waste. As it is lamented by the Prophet *Jeremy*, *Lam.* 2. 7. *And your Sons and your Daughters, saith God, who are the Desire of your Eyes, shall fall by the Sword, and shall perish with my polluted Sanctuary*: For thus he explains this passage in the 24, 25, verses of this Chapter. Thus *Ezekiel* is unto you a Sign: according to all that he hath done shall you do, and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord God. Also thou

(r) See Contin. of Mr. Pool's Annot. upon the place.

(f) See *Dicodon*, *Lumieres de la Raison*, trait. 2. Ch. 7.

Son of Man, shall it not be in the day, when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their Sons and their Daughters? You shall do as I have done, you shall not be able to make a regular Mourning, you shall not cover your lips, nor eat the bread of Men, you shall not make any solemn Lamentations, or Funeral Solemnities for your dead Relations: So perplexing will be your distress, and so great the multitude of the slain: but you shall pine away in your Iniquities, and tho' you shall mourn inwardly, (and have cause enough to do so) you shall not dare to shew it, for fear of the Chaldeans. As is foretold by another Prophet, Jer. 16. 6, 7. *Both the great and the small shall dye in this Land, they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. Neither shall men tear themselves for them in Mourning, to comfort them for the Dead, neither shall men give them the Cup of Consolation to drink, for their Father, or for their Mother.*

Thus Ezekiel was to be a Sign unto them; for tho God removed from him one of the most valuable Blessings that could be, yet the stroke was not so severe and afflictive unto the Prophet, but the Calamity signified by it, to come upon the Jews, was much more dreadful.

God

God had long and often admonish'd them to repent, but they slighted his Messages, and hated and persecuted those that brought them, despising the Remedies, and Physicians too; so that at length he resolves to spare them no longer, and forbids his Prophet to pray for them any more, *Jer. 7. 16.* *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry, nor pray for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee.* He had charged them at the 4. verse not to trust in lying words, saying, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these:* not to put confidence in the Flatteries of the false Prophets, who told them that this City should not be destroyed, nor this people go into Captivity, because of their particular relation unto God, above all other Nations of the Earth, and because of his special presence in the Temple; these were but *lying words*, which would deceive them. For since they had polluted his Sanctuary, turned the *House of Prayer into a Den of Thieves*, God would even consume his own house, and (t) suffer it to be burnt with fire, its Walls to be broken down, and the Vessels of Gold and Silver, and Brass, with all its Treasure and costly Furniture, to be carried to *Babylon*: Their Feast-days, and

(t) See Mr. Lees *Solomon's Temple*, chap. 10.

New-Moons, Sabbaths, and Solemnities, all to cease, and the very place where the Temple once stood in it's Beauty and Glory, to become the (u) Dunghill of another City, call'd *Elia*. And to render this probable, he bids them consider the ruine of *Shilo*, ver. 12. *Go unto my place in Shilo, and see what I have done to my house there, for the wickedness of my people Israel*, 1 Sam. 4. 11. Psal. 78. 61. How God forsook his Tabernacle, and deliver'd his strength into Captivity; how he gave his people to the Sword, and was wroth with his Inheritance, &c. *Shilo* was a City belonging to the Tribe of *Ephraim*; where, before the building of *Solomon's Temple*, the Ark had it's usual residence, tho' occasionally removed sometimes. The *Ark* of the Testament, which contained the two Tables of the Law, and so testified their Covenant relation: The *Ark*, which was the Glory, and the strength of *Israel*, the Symbol of Gods presence with them, and the Terror of their Enemies; for the Seat of God was between the Cherubims, which was over the Ark, where he promised to meet, and commune with his people, *Exod.* 25. 21. before it Sacrifices were offer'd; 1 Sam. 6. 14. and when it set forward in the Wilderness, *Moses* said,

(u) *Sterquilium Urbis novæ*. Hieronym. in Isa: 64. where of *Jerom* was an Eye-witness.

Arise,

*Arise, O Lord, and let thy Enemies be scattered; and when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel, Numb. 10. 35. But after the Land of Canaan was subdued, the Ark was lodg'd in Shilo, being removed from thence into the Israelites Camp, 1 Sam. 4. When in the Fight against the Philistines, Ely's Sons were slain, the Ark was taken, and Israel routed : And afterwards it was removed to another Tribe, for the wickedness of Israel, (viz.) from Ephraim to Judah, from Shilo to the Temple at Mount Sion : which very Temple, with the Ark it self, God here resolves to destroy, for the Iniquity of the House of Judah. And to assure the Prophet that he would not alter his purpose, he forbids him to pray against it. Now lest the people should take it ill, that he did not use his utmost endeavours to hinder this Calamity, or least the Prophet himself should be discouraged, by praying to no purpose ; God condescends to double and treble the prohibition : *Not to pray, not to lift up a cry, not to make Intercession ; for, says he, I will not hear. q. d. I will not repent of my denounced Vengeance : I will not be diverted from that destruction, I have resolv'd to inflict ; neither shall the intercession of any others for them be prevalent and effectual. There are six eminent Persons mentioned by name, Jeremiah, Moses, Samuel, Noah, Job and Daniel, yet neither of them singly nor all of them together, should prevail,*
by*

by their Intercessions, to preserve *Jerusalem*, or deliver the *Jews* from this Captivity into *Babylon*, Jer. 15. 1. Ezek. 14. 16, 18, 20.

A few Verses before this Text will manifest this resolv'd Purpose of God, concerning this Matter. Ver. 13, 14. *In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee: I the Lord have spoken it, it shall come to pass, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God.* q. d. Think not that my Prophets have invented a sad Story of their own, and denounced Judgment without my warrant; for it is *I the Lord have said it*. They did only reveal my Purpose, and declare my Counsel; I will do according to their Prediction: I that sent them, will most assuredly bring it to pass. And think not that this Judgment is a great way off, and you need not be concern'd for any thing at such a distance; for *it shall shortly come to pass*, it is even at hand. And think not that your Fortresses, and Strong-Holds shall be your defence; that your City is impregnable against the force of the *Chaldeans* Army; that the King of *Babylon* is too weak and impotent to prevail against *Jerusalem*; for *I myself will do it*: I have Commission'd him to perform my Pleasure, and I will assist him

him to execute my Threatning: And flatter not your selves, that my Purpose may alter, and I may be intreated to delay for some time, for *I will not go back, or spare you any longer*: Do not imagine, that because I have formerly been intreated to repent, I may now be so again; for it is added, *I will not Repent*: And it is but just and equal I should thus resolve; for *according to thy ways and doings thou shalt be judged, saith the Lord*. And then in the Text he hath a Sign of all this, by the Death of his nearest Relation, *the taking away the desire of his Eyes with a stroke*.

III. Having considered this Passage, as to the *Literal* and *Parabolical* sence of it, what the Expressions signifie in themselves, and what they are designed to represent to the *Jews*; let us now consider how far they are *Applicable* to us in ordinary Cases. For when God removed from the Prophet *Ezekiel* the *desire of his eyes*, he forbids him to *mourn* or *weep*: But from such an extraordinary Case, which had so plain a design, and direct reference to the *Jewish Nation*, we cannot argue against all *Mourning for the Dead*, or Expressions of Sorrow, when a *Delightful and Beloved Relation* is taken from us. No, *Mournings* and *Lamentations* are allowed, and commendable, if we keep within the *Bounds of Reason and Religion*. It is a piece
of

of Justice to the Deceas'd, to Bewail them. It is threatned as a Judgment, *Jer. 21.* when any Die without being Lamented: Yea, it is said to be *the Portion of the wicked from God, and the Heritage of the Oppressor, that they are cut off, and their Widows shall not weep, Job 27. 13, 14, 15.*

Holy *Abraham* we find Lamenting and Weeping when *Sarah* died; (who is the first Woman whose Burial is mentioned in Scripture, and the only Woman, the number of whose Years are accounted there.) Tho' he had pass'd many Difficulties before, and met with many Temptations, and been tried with many Conflicts, as leaving his Countrey, hazarding his Life, obliged to Banish one beloved Son out of his House, and commanded to Sacrifice another with his own Hands; yet we do not read of his *mourning and weeping* till the Death of his beloved *Sarah*, *Gen. 23. 1, 2.* neither is he here ^{or} any where condemned for dropping a Tear upon this Occasion.

But our great concern, in such Cases, is to keep within Bounds; as upright *Job*, who rent his Cloaths, and shaved his Head, and fell upon his Face to the ground, when he heard the News of his Childrens Death; and yet even there he worship'd God, and had this Testimony, That *in all this he sinned not, or charged God foolishly, Job. 1. 22.* For Mourn we may, and Weep we may, and Lament we may, but not with an undue Violence, as
David

David for Absalom, 2 Sam. 18. 33. Nor as *Rachel for her Children*, who refus'd to be comforted: Or as *Rizpah*, who attended the Carcasses of her Sons, and would not be parted from them, 2 Sam. 21. 10. Or as *Jacob*, when *Joseph* was missing, who will go down to the Grave to his Son mourning, Gen. 37. 35. Or as *Jonah*, when God smote his Goard, and made it wither, Jonah. 4. 8. His Spirit droopt, and he resolves to die too.

If God takes away the Joy of our Heart, and *Delight of our Eyes*; (such Relations as he made so, one that from him, and by him, and in Subordination to him, was so;) we must not yet forget our Relation to God; we must not over-look the Designs of his Providence, or the Encouragements of his Word; we must not Mourn as Ignorant, Hopeless Heathens, that never saw the Bible, or heard of Christ.

I shall therefore comprize what I have to say as to this Occasion, under *Two Generals*: The one of *Duty*, the other of *Support*, whenever God takes away the *desire of our Eyes with a stroke*.

First, We are call'd, in such a Case, to consider upon what Grounds, and with what Design, and for what Ends, it pleaseth God thus to Afflict and make a Tryal of his Servants. And thereby we may learn, in what manner we ought to Regard and Improve such

such Dispensations. This will concern the Duty of those who are thus exercised.

Secondly, As to *Support and Comfort*, for the Prevention of immoderate Sorrow and Mourning; I shall consider what is proper and sufficient to bear up a Christian Spirit in such Cases; and withal take notice how vain and ineffectual are all the little Considerations which some are wont to offer, and others to have recourse to, for Encouragement under such Tryals, without going into the Sanctuary, and consulting the Holy Oracles.

First, When the like Case doth happen, as it may to the best of Men, we are to consider upon what *Righteous Grounds*, and with what *Merciful Designs* God doth thus afflict and prove any of us; or may do so, if as yet he hath not. Though God had imparted his secret Counsels to this Prophet, and employ'd him in the most Honourable, Noble and Excellent Work, though he had been true to his Commission, and faithfully delivered the Messages he received; pleading the Cause of God with undaunted Courage and Resolution, notwithstanding the Hatred, and Persecution, and Hazard of his Life, whereunto his Fidelity expos'd him; yet God thinks fit by such a stroke as this, to Afflict and Prove him, and make him a Sign and a Warning to others.

We should not therefore wonder, as if some strange and new thing hath happened to us, when God takes from us our most desirable Relations: If he remove our dearest Comforts, and that with very little warning: If he wound and smite us in the Apple of our Eye; and pluck from our Embraces that which of all Earthly Blessings our Heart is most set upon: We ought not in such Cases to say, with *Gideon*, Judg. 6. 13. *If the Lord be with us, if he accept us, if he favours us, how is it, and why is it, that this evil hath befallen us?* As if God were obliged to gratifie us in all our Wishes: As if he were bound to take nothing from us that we are unwilling to part with, though it be his own, more than ours.

My Brethren, I find it to be no such easie matter, in practical Instances, to reconcile the belief of God's gracious Presence with smart and pressing Afflictions. We are ready to say with the Sisters of *Lazarus*, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not died.*

If the Lord were with us, it would have been otherwise; we are all too prone to think and say so. Such are our mistaken Apprehensions concerning God, under the darkness of our present state: Such is our inordinate Esteem and Affection for Temporal Blessings: So Ignorant or Inconsiderate are we about the Design and End of
God

God in Afflicting us: So little do we understand, or consider that great Revenue of Glory which God may bring to himself by our smartest Tryals: So apt are we to look back on the Comforts we have lost, and let our Thoughts loose to aggravate our present Wants, by reviewing the Advantages we once enjoy'd, and are now deprived of: So partially, so slightly, so seldom do we contemplate the Nature and Tenure of the Covenant of Grace, which does suppose, and make allowance for such Visitations, and hath provided for our Relief under them: And so it comes to pass, that we are too ready to question his Fatherly Love, by reason of such Rebukes: Not considering that *whom the Lord loves, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6. But the Usefulness and Necessity of such Providences, and the Wisdom and Faithfulness of God therein, may be made conspicuous to a considering Mind: And it is frequently acknowledged by the Experience of those who are exercised in this kind, That it is no more than is needful, that we should sometimes be in heaviness by such Dispensations: As will appear by considering a few things.

First, Such Providences are proper to Awaken Repentance, for our many Omissions and Failings, in the Relation we stood to them whom God hath taken from us. How seriously

riously should we reflect, Did I discharge the Duty of my Place to such, or such a deceased Relative? Did I value and prize such a Mercy as I ought? Did I thankfully Improve such a Blessing as I might? It is our fault and folly, as well as our unhappiness, that we seldom know how to prize and use such Mercies, till God hath depriv'd us of them. And that neglect is no way to be retriev'd, but by a penitent sense of our Error, in compliance with the Call of God: That Call of God, I mean, which he gives us by their Removal. And it is part of the Wisdom of God's Government, to order our Tryals and Afflictions, for the kind, for the manner, and for the season of them, as may best serve to convince us of our Sin, and promote our Repentance.

For Example, *Children* should consider upon the Death of *Holy Parents*, in what Instances they failed of hearkning to their Counsels, and following their Instructions, Admonitions, and Examples; of paying that Honour, Reverence, Duty, and Obedience which God commands. They should then remember, consider, and mourn, to think how often their Miscarriages against God, and them, was a Grief and Burthen to their Souls, and made them walk softly: They should recall the Vanity of their Childhood, and review the Stubbornness, and Frowardness, and Intractableness of Youth; and the many particular

ticular provocations they were guilty of while their Parents lived ; against their frequent Reproofs, against the cry of their prayers, and the meaning of their Tears, against their many Warnings, and Compassionate Calls to Repentance, against all the methods God used to awaken, humble, and reform them : Is not this the voice of such a Rod to many Children, when their godly Parents are taken away by Death ? And the like Reflections should *Parents* make, when God removes their grown Children ; whether they have answered their Trust, and been faithful to their Souls ; solemnly dedicating them to God, endeavouring to instruct them in the Principles of Religion, and Educating them in the Christian Faith, and saving them from the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil ; endeavouring by all means to make Religion amiable, and Sin odious, and practical Godliness lovely, by their own Circumspect walking, by keeping up the Authority of God, and his daily Worship in their houses, by faithful Instructions, and prudent seasonable Reproofs, and fervent Holy Prayer to God for them, and with them, &c.

The like for other Relations, when the *Desire of our Eyes* is removed, as a Dear Husband, or a beloved Wife. God expects we should reflect, and consider, whether we enter'd into such a Relation, as becomes Chri-

stians, *marrying in the Lord*: Whether we did walk as Heirs of the Grace of Life together: whether by tenderness and Affection, by Meekness and Wisdom, by Watchfulness and Prayer, by Counsel and other Assistance, we faithfully performed the Duty of that Relation. We ought to reflect in such cases, How much more good we might have received, and done with reference to the Deceased? How much more we might have contributed than we did, to the furtherance of their Grace and Holiness, their Knowledge and Comfort, their peace of Conscience, and meetness for Heaven? or what Advantage and Increase of *our own*, we might have had by their means, and did not improve. You that are now Happy in one anothers Affection, remember this, before a parting time do come: for such thoughts as these will be apt to follow us, under such providences, and it is fit they should.

And if we have the warning of their Approaching Change by *Sickness*; it may then be proper to reflect, how we then demean'd our selves? whether we were duly sensible of it? what was the Temper of our Spirits in prayer for them? and what our carriage and deportment toward them, and toward God, with relation to their case: How far we expected and prepared for a Separation by Death? what solemn acts of Resignation of them, and of our selves, to the Will of God,

God, our Spirits were formed to? what impressions their Sick-bed Discourses, their Dying Speeches, Comforts, or Counsels, with their last Agonies, had upon us? what Duty lyes upon us at such a time, in reference to these things, is sufficiently obvious: But how far we then comported with it, ought seriously to be inquired, when God hath removed them by Death; that wherein we have failed, we may be awaken'd to *Repent*, which is *one Design* of God by such a stroke.

Secondly, To testify his Displeasure for our fond *Inordinate Affections* to those Relatives he snatcheth from us, and to prevent the like as to those that survive.

God is Jealous of his Honour, and he will not bear a Rival; and if the *Desire of our Eyes* lay too near our Hearts, and rob him of our Delight, and Love, and Time, no wonder if he make a Separation. When *Jacob's* Affection to his *Joseph* and *Benjamin* were so excessive, that his Life was bound up in theirs, *he* and *his* must then be parted: And the good Old Man be brought to say with a doleful accent, and aking Heart, *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and must Benjamin go too? all these things are against me.* A Husband, a Wife, a Mother, a Father, a Child, a Friend which is as thy own Soul; Any of them, All of them must go, *if we Love them too well. i. e. if we value them too*

highly; if we delight in them excessively; if we rejoyce in them more than in the presence of God; if we place the satisfaction of our Minds, the solace of our Lives, too much in their Company; if we love them not *only* in the Lord, or in subordination to him; if we reckon ^{upon} too much content in their Continuance; if we are too unwilling to part with them at the Call of God, &c.

This we may be sure of, God will break that from us, from which we would not be broken, or turn it to our Cross. And that stroke which makes the breach, should teach us to moderate our Affections to surviving Friends; to Possess, Enjoy and Use all things and persons in this World, as if we used them not, because the time is short, and the fashion of the World passeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 31. That we may be brought to speak it as the inward sense of our very Hearts: Lord, I see all Earthly Comforts are withering Gourds, how quickly, how easily, how suddenly are they gone! O let me henceforward, make thee my only Portion and Treasure; let me seek thy Favour, value thy Love, prize thy presence, in and above all things: thou art the only Fountain of Living Water, all Creatures are but broken Cisterns, that can hold little or none; and how unexpectedly may they be dry'd up! Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and who or what is there desireable on Earth besides thee?

Happy

Happy is that Soul who Answers this design of God, and is brought to this frame by such a stroke.

Thirdly, God may sometimes intend to Try our Sincerity, and Improve our Trust in him alone. To know what is in our Hearts, i. e. To let it be known unto our selves and others, whether we can love him as a Father, though we feel his Rod: whether we can stoop to his Disposing Authority, and submit to his Hand, when it is most heavy: and acquiesce in his Orders, when they are most severe. To try whether we can receive Evil from God, as well as Good: and bless him for Taking, as well as Giving: to try whether we can trust him, though he slay us; and say with *Hezekiah*, *Good is the Word of the Lord*, even when he calls for the *Desire of our Eyes*. To try whether we can believe his Word, trust his Providence, and depend upon his Care, and hope for his Salvation when the Helps, and Assistances, and Instruments of his Mercy, which we formerly had, are withdrawn. In a word, whether God alone be enough for our Souls to live upon, and be reckoned sufficient for our Stay, Support, and Strength, whatsoever Disappointments, Losses, and Difficulties we meet with. Whether we will abide by our Agreement, when we first yielded our selves to the Lord, to be absolutely dispos'd of, as well as rul'd by him. And how

how often have we since renew'd that Covenant, and given up our selves and ours to the Lord : He will try by such providences, whether we are satisfied he shall take us at our word.

Fourthly, Sometimes he does it as a Preparative for *Patience* under further Tryals, either Personal and particular, or publick and National. God in wisdom inures our Spirits to a suffering State, and brings us off by degrees from the Love of this World. He trains us up in Self-denying-Exercises, that we may be the better prepared to meet him in the way of his Judgments : That by Suffering, we may learn to suffer. He takes away somewhat which we dearly loved, that it may be less difficult for us to part with the Remainder : That our proud Hearts being humbled, and our stubborn Wills bowed, we may be more ready to bear, and suffer, and lose, as he shall think fit. We need be instructed a good while in the School of Affliction, perfectly to learn Patience, and Resignation to the Will of God. So difficult a Lesson as that of *Self-denial*, will not be learned all at one time. One Instance of a calm Submission to the Divine Will, may dispose us for another that is more difficult ; for if we cannot give up our *Relations* to the Will of God, how shall we be able to resign our *Selves* ? If the Foot-men tire us, how shall we contend with Horses ?

Horses? If we can't part with the Life of a Friend we love, how shall we surrender our Own, if he shall call us to do so? If we send up our impatient Murmurs to Heaven, when any of them die, (though it be peaceably on their Beds,) how shall we be able to resist unto Blood? or to die at a Stake, if that should ever become our Duty? If the Calamities common to Men be so heavy for our Shoulders, what shall we do in a Fiery Tryal? Therefore God in Wisdom remembers our Ignorance and Frailty, and considers our Weakness, and accordingly he trains up and prepares us by degrees.

Fifthly, The Last and General Reason of all such Strokes, is to mind surviving Relations and Acquaintance, and all that hear of it, to prepare to follow. All the frequent Warnings of God, which you have lately had of this kind, speak very loudly the Language of our blessed Lord, *Mat. 24. 44. Be ye also ready.* Consider your Latter End; Number your Days; Know that you hasten to an Eternal State. Some of us especially should take the Warning, unto whom the Blow comes nearer home. When Death enters into the very House where we sojourn; and lessens or dissolves our Families; when God draws away the Veil, and exposes the Picture of Death naked to our view, and holds it before our Eyes; he bids us, of all others, make

make haste with our Work, and be ready; and not foolishly flatter our selves, that we have many Years to come in this World. Do we not see our own Friends and Relations, that were more likely to live than we, Month after Month, drop into the Grave? And is it not the House appointed for all the Living? Shall we not think our own turn is coming? May not Thine be next, or Mine next? Does not every deceased Friend tell us, we are living-dying Persons, who shall shortly follow them, but they not return to us: Their Seats and Places, here and at home, shall henceforth know them no more: And will it not ere long be as certainly true of us, of every one of us, as true as if our Breath were gone, and our Eyes closed, and our Teeth set, and our Friends had left us as if, we were laid in the Graves, and the Funeral Ceremonies were over, and our Bodies cover'd with the Bones and Earth that must be our Company in the house of Darkness? Oh that we were wise to understand, and believe this, and consider our Latter End! Thus concerning the Duty of Mourners.

II. For the prevention of *Immoderate Sorrow*, and *Irregular Mourning*, which is next to be considered: I desire it may be observ'd, that many persons seek for Comfort in such Cases, where it is not to be had; and hope to encourage and support themselves from
weak

weak, mistaken, or deceitful Principles: we are apt to lean on some broken Reed, that will not sustain but pierce us. Under this and the other leaf we seek for Consolation, and find a Serpent lurking there; but all our turnings of devices proves but like the Potter's Clay, which breaks and moulders between our Fingers: We would fain draw the Water of Comfort out of this Brook, or the other Puddle, instead of going to Jacob's Well, the true and only Fountain: I mean, instead of consulting the Holy Scriptures. We disquiet our Minds in vain, stretch our Imaginations, and busie our inquiring thoughts, to find out Remedies against the Evils we suffer, but till we go into the Sanctuary, we search in vain.

All the Precepts and Instructions of Philosophers are weak and ineffectual to a Christian. To change the Nature of Afflictive Evils, or wholly to extirpate our own Affections, will be found impossible: Fatal Necessity asserted by some, and the Doctrine of Contingency and Change, explained by others, will not quiet or satisfy an Afflicted Mourner. To say we should have constantly expected this, and the like Calamity before-hand, is in some sense true; but does not that inflict as much of the Evil before, as it takes off afterward? For such * a fore-

* Parker's *Demonst. of the Law of Nat.* part 1. §. 28.

sight and Expectation cannot be without Anxiety, and many sad and melancholly thoughts: I mean, upon Principles meerly Philosophical, it cannot. And therefore it is a Disputable point among that sort of men, whether it be best to be surprized by an Evil, or to pre-meditate and foresee it's approach. Both grant we are condemned to be miserable. Think upon it before-hand, says the one sort, that you may feel it the less: Never think of it before, says the other, with equal reason, that you may not feel it twice.

But others more plausibly, and with some Weight, will be ready to say, You knew a *Parting Time* must come: You knew the Matrimonial Union might easily, and suddenly, be dissolved and broken by Death. What did you not know, that you and your Relations must Die? or did you not live together with this design, to help and prepare one another for Death? And the Providence of God continued such a suitable Relation to you for so many years: might he not have made this breach sooner? you ought to be thankful for such a blessing so long.

Besides, it may be added as to the *manner* of their Disease, they had what Art and Care could do to preserve their Lives; and earnest prayer to God was added, if it did consist but with his Holy Pleasure, that they might be longer spar'd. And after all, they Died

Died quietly on their Beds, and went to the Grave in peace, and died Lamented, and the last Offices of Friendship were perform'd at their Funerals, &c.

Moreover, you know not but they *are taken away from the evil to come*; for notwithstanding the beginning and progress of National Deliverances thus far, some of us may live to see the Cup of Trembling, that our Neighbours and Brethren have drank of, come round to us, so that the dead may be accounted more happy than the Living: As the Prophet speaks, *Jer. 22. 10. Weep not for the Dead, but weep for him that goes forth, and escapeth Death.* You know not but such a Calamity may befall this Land, this City, or their own Family, or Dearest Friends, as would have made their Lives bitter, and miserable, if they had been prolong'd.

And were nothing of all this to be consider'd, it might yet be said, *It is in vain to weep and mourn, you cannot call back the Desire of your Eyes to Life again.* You only torment and hurt your self, for heaviness in the Heart of Man makes it stoop: it dries the bones, and deadens the Spirit, and very much unfits for the Duties and Comforts of Life. Yea, which is worse, Immoderate sorrow for your departed Friends, does but prove that you love this World too well; it shews too plainly, that your Faith concerning the Invisible Future World is very weak; that you your
selves

selves as yet are too unprepar'd to die; or count upon tarrying longer here, than it may be God intends you shall. These and such like considerations have all their influence and use, in their proper place, to contribute somewhat to our support, but of themselves are not sufficient.

There are four things, (among others,) that a Christian Mourner ought to consider for his Relief.

1. Whose Hand it is that gives the *stroke*, who it is that does it.

2. The *Faithfulness* of God to his Covenant Promise, notwithstanding any such Providences.

3. The Gain of those who Die in the Lord, by our loss of their Company.

4. Our Belief and Hope of meeting them again, with all the Children of the Kingdom, and being with them for ever with the Lord in Glory. And let me add, our Expectation of *knowing* them there; for that to me is more than probable.

First, We should not Grieve immoderately, when *Dear Relations* are remov'd by *Death*, because it is the *Lord* that doth it; he who hath a Sovereign Authority and unquestionable Right to dispose of us and them, as seems him good. *I take away the Desire of thine Eyes with a stroke; I have done it, saith the Lord.* We mistake our Tenure, if we think

think he may not call for for his own, when-
soever he pleaseth. The Lord *gives*, and the
Lord *takes*, we must adore and bless his
Holy Name in both: He is not responsible
at our Bar, or Accountable to us, for eve-
ry thing he does: He hath not given us an
account of all his matters: He does not
think fit to answer all our Questions, or say
all he can, to vindicate the Righteousness,
and Wisdom of his present proceedings, —
therefore, why dost thou strive with him? Job 33. 13.
Asa Ruler, it is true he hath shewed us reason
enough in the general for such Providences, but
as our absolute Lord and Owner, he need not.

It may be we importunately prayed for
their Recovery, that God would spare them
longer: But if we did not pray with a hum-
ble submission to his holy Will, our very
Prayer was a Provocation, and we need to
repent, and mourn for ourselves. And do
not all holy Parents, pray more earnestly
for the Salvation of their Children, and yet
you know they are not all answer'd in kind:
if they were, all the World would be sa-
ved; for doubtless holy *Noah* prayed for
all his Children; and they, if they were
holy, would do so for them, &c. But do
we not daily supplicate for the honour of
Gods Government, for the Glory of his
Name, the accomplishment of his Councils,
and the fulfilling of his unerring Will? and

shall we Repine and Murmur, when our prayers are answer'd?

Consider then, *whose Hand it is*: It is He hath taken who gave thee that, and all thy other Mercies, and prolongs innumerable ones, which thou hast forfeited: And *shall we not receive evil at the hand of God, as well as good?* Job 2. 10. Especially since he may have the same kind, and merciful design in *taking* as he had in *giving*, and hath promised that *all things* (this not excepted) *shall work for good*: It is *He* hath done it, who is Infinitely Wise and Gracious, who loves, and pities, and spares us as a Father does a Child. And shall we not drink of that Cup which our Heavenly Father hath put into our hands? His Sovereignty might justly silence us, but his Goodness, Righteousness, and Wisdom, should calm and settle our Hearts, and make us resign our Will to his. It is *He* hath done it, who hath purchased a people out of the World, and is collecting them one after another, so soon as they are ready, and have served the ends of his Glory upon Earth: And how shall the many Sons and Daughters be brought to Heaven, (for which end the Son of God was incarnate and dyed) if we and others should have our wish, that God should take whom he would, and when he pleased, but *our Relations* should be excepted? It is *He* hath done it, who told us, *that whosoever loves Father, or Mother*

ther, Wife, or Child, more than Christ, cannot be his Disciple, Luke 14. 26. It is *He*, unto whom our Relation is nearer, sweeter, and more indissoluble, than *that* unto any of our Friends on Earth can be. It is *He* hath done it, who said, *Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me shall be where I am, to behold my Glory*, John 17. 14. And when he would remove any of such a Character, how dear soever unto us, shall our Reluctant will oppose and gainsay his Wise and Just, and Holy Pleasure? Shall any of us dare say in such a case, that *he is mine*, or *she is mine*, I cannot yield to let them go? would we insinuate that they are more *ours*, than *his*? did he not make them? did he not renew them? and make them meet for Heaven? and ought he not rather to dispose of them according to *His Will*, than *ours*? ought not *ours* to subscribe to his?

Secondly, Consider the *Faithfulness* of God to his Covenant promises, notwithstanding such Providential Tryals. Whatsoever change He makes in our Families, and conditions, the Blessed God is still the same, *what*, and *where* he was, tho' our Relations and Friends are not what they were, or where they were. Tho' a House be broken up, and a Family dissolv'd, tho' one or more of the principal Members of it be snatch'd away, we who are left, may yet with *David* encour-

rage our selves in the Lord our God, 2 Sam. 23. 5. saying, Tho' my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, and this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire: And is not this All enough? Ought we not so to reckon it? that tho' we should be forsaken of all Creatures, God will never leave us, nor forsake us; that we shall not be left alone, he will still be with us; the Husband of the Widow, and the Father of the Fatherless; shewing Mercy to them that fear him, and to their Seed after them, and his Righteousness (or promised Mercy) to their Childrens Children, Psal. 103. 7.

Can he not be better than all Relations? could any one of them be a Blessing or a Comfort to us without him? Was it not from God, if any of them were so? how easily might he have imbitter'd their Company, who were the Delight of our Eyes? And can he not supply that Loss out of his own fulness? Was he the Author of all the Comfort we enjoyed in, and by them, and cannot he make amends for their Absence? Is not the Presence of the God of all Consolation, equivalent to theirs? May he not make us Gainers? and oblige us to own by Comfortable Experience, that in very faithfulness he hath thus afflicted? Did we better clear up our Covenant-Interest in the *Al sufficiency* of God, it would be a special Means of
our

our Support, in this, and all other afflicting Cases.

Thirdly, Let us look from our selves to *Them*, whom God hath taken from us, and compare their *Gain* with our *Loss*; and that will infer a Defect, either in our Faith, or in our Friendship, if we Mourn immoderately for those who Dye in the Lord, and sleep in Jesus.

I Confess the Death of *Wicked Relations* is a very perplexing, and humbling Case. But yet we must remember, God is Wiser and more Merciful than we, and doth all things for his own Glory: And we cannot doubt, but when we come to Heaven, our Minds and Wills shall be entirely Conform'd to his. And for the present it cannot well be Answer'd, Why one or two of our particular Kindred, that Dyed in Sin, shou'd be so much more lamented, than the many Hundreds and Thousands, that every Week or Month are cut off under Damning Guilt. Let us thank God for his distinguishing Grace, if He have brought *us* to Repent, and Believe, and Obey the Gospel; and do what we can that others also may, especially those of our Kindred and Acquaintance: with unfeigned Sorrow that we have done no more to further their Conversion and Salvation; and then we may rejoyce in the Glory of God, and our Blessed Redeemer, by the Faith

and Holiness of those that are or shall be saved.

Were this our Temper, as it ought to be, we should not be apt to grieve excessively at the Death of our Holy Friends: For they are delivered from the Guilt and Power of Sin, and have received the End of their Faith, and Patience, and Hope: They have overcome the difficulties that we must longer Conflict with, and have safely pass'd those Changes we must yet be proved by. We have many Dangers yet to escape, many hazardous Temptations yet to resist; a difficult Warfare yet to manage, against the Enemy of our Souls; many weary Dayes and Hours to pass, under the troublesome Effects of Sin, and the Assaults of the Devil: We must yet tarry in the Wilderness, and know the Tryals of a sojourning State, while they are got safe to the Promised Rest: We must yet toil, and labour, and strive under the Cares, and Fears, and Wants, and Difficulties of many kinds, inward and outward, Personal and Relative, publick and private, but they are beyond the reach of either; they shall be allur'd, or disquieted, by the suggestions of the Devil no more; they shall be in fear of Hell, and under Apprehensions of Gods Displeasure no more; they shall be in hazard of infection by bad Company, or grieved by the scandals and ill Examples of the Ungodly no more, for
they

they are joynd to the Holy Society above, in the blessed Visions, Services, and Rejoycings of that better World.

Not only are they deliver'd from what is now afflictive to us, but bountifully rewarded, and Happy in the Knowledge, and Love of God. Not only have they their iron Fetters knock'd off from their feet, but a Crown of Glory put upon their Heads: Not only stript of their filthy Garments, but cloathed with the pure and immortal Light: Not only all their Sorrows vanisht, but their Souls filled with unutterable Joy, waiting for the Completion of it, at the Resurrection of the Dead.

We think, it may be, we stand in need of *their* Company; we are certain they need not *ours*, having left an Imperfect, Dark, Defiling, Tempting, Troublesome, Miserable World, and are gone to a Blessed Society, and State of Holiness and Peace; from Doubts, and Darkness, and Complaints, to the Bosom of Infinite Love, where they shall Complain and Weep no more for ever. And therefore tho our Saviour *Wept* when *Lazarus* dyed, because it is said *he loved him*, the reason seems to be, because our Lord knew that † *Lazarus* was to return to be upon the Earth again; he knew that it was

† *Ibid. Pelus. L. 2. Epist. 173.*

for the Glory of God, that he should be raised from the Dead, and return to be Tried, and Tempted, and Troubled again. But it is not so with our departed Friends: Oh let us believingly look upward, where they are, and think what they are doing, and remember how much otherwise it was with them not long ago: And can we wish them back again? while we sigh, and weep, and mourn, we know all Tears are wiped away from their Eyes, and they are singing the Song of the Lamb. They are now feeding on the pleasant Fruits of Paradise, and would we have them back again to eat the Bread of Affliction, and drink the Waters of Affliction? Would we, they should return from the state of Triumph, after Victory, to engage again in new Combats? From the Port and Haven of Eternal Rest, to be tost again upon a Tempestuous Sea? And this, because they were *our Kindred, and our Relations*; for you do not mourn, that the Prophets, and Apostles, and all the Faithful mentioned in Holy Scripture, or since in former Ages, that they are gone to Heaven. The ancient Christians kept Days of Thanksgiving, for the safe Departure of such. But how dear soever they were to us, *we shall go to them, they shall not come to us*: We are very unkind if we desire they should have Tarryed longer, when God hath made them ready; they are gone to better Friends than those they have left

left behind. And if you Loved me, said Christ, you would rejoyce that I said, I go to my Father and your Father, to my God, and your God.

The Friends they have left are imperfect, Sinning, Sorrowing, troublesome and unsuitable, compared with those they meet above. And there only our Friendship, and Affections to one another, will be without any mixture of Grief, or Sin, without any Infirmitie, Suspicion, Discontent, or other allay, by their Weaknesses, Sins, or Sufferings: There shall we have all our Wishes, and Desires, for our Friends, as well as for our Selves; and converse continually together, without being weary of one anothers Company: they had once such a vile Body as we have, and such disorderly Passions, such Errors, and Mistakes, and Actual Sins as we are guilty of; they were troubled with such Temptations, Doubts, and Desertions, as we complain of: but their probationary State is now over, their Warfare is accomplish'd, their Work done, their Race ended, their Course finish'd, and they are enter'd into the Joy of the Lord: Oh let us remember that they are so, while we Weep and Mourn, partly for their Departure, and more (it should be) for our unfitness as yet to be with them. But we have the same God and Saviour, the same Way and Rule, the same blessed Recompence of Reward, propos'd and
pro-

promis'd, and prepar'd; the same Grace and Assistance, offered to enable us to Persevere and Overcome. It is but a little while, since they had as malicious Enemies to oppose and conquer, and as difficult a work to mind as we, and were as unlikely to hold out, as some of us; their inward and outward Troubles were like to ours; their bodily Weaknesses, and Spiritual Distresses like to ours, but they have overcome them; yet a little while, and we hope we may do so too. And it is *but a little while*; let us not then *grieve immoderately*, being our selves to follow so soon after, to partake (we hope) in that Blessedness with them for ever, which we have often joyned together in Prayer, to ask of God for them, and for our selves. And this we need not question, if we choose the same Felicity * as our End, and Christ as the Captain of our Salvation, to direct and lead us in the way thither; if we build on the same Word of Promise, and follow the Conduct of the same Spirit of Holiness; if we live in the exercise of the like Grace, and are conform'd to Christ our Head in Spirit, Purpose, and Behaviour, and hold on in doing and suffering his Will, with constancy to the Death. If we do thus, we shall shortly be with them; and because we were wont to mourn with

* Mr. Baxters Life of Faith. ch: 26.

them, when they mourned, and to take part in their Afflictions; let us do so in their Joys also; Thanking God for their Deliverance, and Rejoycing in their Felicity.

Fourthly, The last Argument for our Support, is *the Belief and Hope of the Resurrection of the Dead*, when we shall meet them, and all the Children of the Kingdom, in the presence of the Lord. We know that *those who sleep in Jesus; he will bring with him*, and openly abtolve, and own them before all the World, and give them the full possession of the *promised Inheritance*. We are bid to *Comfort* our selves, and one another, with such joyful words. 'Tis *Comfort* that there is a Redeemer, and that he is their Redeemer, as well as ours; that he Lives, and will come again; and that *we know this*, on certain and infallible grounds; and *that when he shall appear, we shall be like him*, by seeing him as he is. It is *Comfort*, that even these Bodies that must be buried out of sight, and putrifie in a silent Grave, shall be raised, and enlivened, and made like the glorious Body of our Redeemer. Tho' Death devour their Beauty, and the Grave hold them Prisoners for some thousands of years; tho' they should be burnt to Ashes, or devour'd by Worms, Beasts, or Fishes, however crumbled and divided into little parts, and these scatter'd and dispers'd into a thousand distant places; yet he will raise

raise, and re-unite, and restore them, fresh and spritely, beautiful and glorious. That Power which at first did form, and fashion them in the Womb, hath engaged to do it. *This Corruptible shall put on Incorruption; and this Mortal put on Immortality; and Death be swallowed up in Victory.* What was sown in *Weakness* shall then be *raised in Power*: our Bodies shall then be Active and Nimble, quick and free, easily passing in a little space to a great distance, and readily obeying the Motions of our Glorified Spirits. What was sown a *Natural, Earthly Body*, shall be raised *Spiritual*; suited to the spiritual State, and Life, and work of Heaven; not needing the supplies of Food or Physick, or any of those things which now employ so much of our Time and Care, in reference to the Body. In a word, they shall be *raised in Glory*, however *vile* they now are, as the Bodies of our *Humiliation*: And shall shine brighter than the Sun in it's Meridian Splendor, with a *Glory* suitable to the Excellency of that Power exerted in their Resurrection, suitable to the Dignity of our Glorified Souls, suitable to the Glory of that Place, where they are to inhabit; and of the Noble Services, wherein they are to be employed; and especially suitable to their Excellent *Exemplar*, the Glorious Body of Christ, whose Resurrection and Exaltation is the Cause, Pattern, and Pledge of ours.

And

And this we may depend upon, for our Lord hath not only left us *the Earnest of his Spirit*, to assure us of the Resurrection, that our Mortal Bodies shall be quicken'd by the same Spirit, that raised him from the Dead; but he hath carried *the Earnest of our Flesh* into Heaven with him, to assure us, that all his Friends, Favourites, and Followers, shall one day be with him, to behold his Glory.

Let this then be remembered as the matter of our Christian Hope, that we may not mourn, * as strangers to the Gospel, for such as dye in the Lord. We find the Egyptians mourned longer for Jacob than Joseph did, even *threescore and ten days*. They that have little Knowledge, and Expectation concerning *another Life*, and the Resurrection of the Dead, may more excusably extend their Funeral Sorrows, and grieve for the loss of *this*, and equal the Days of their Mourning to the number of the years of the Life of Man: but so tedious a Funeral Solemnity would have been unsuitable to Joseph's Faith. Had he shown himself more a Son, by such a Testimony of his Natural Affection, in Mourning longer, he had shown himself less a Patriarch.

* See Cyprian de Mortalitate ad finem. Greg. Narianz. Orat. deca. in laudem Casarii Fratris Fun.

When

When God restored to *Job*, after his long Tryals, *double* for all his Cattel and Goods which he had lost, as Fourteen thousand Sheep for Seven thousand, &c. he gave him but the same number of Children again : for they were not really *lost*, though Death remov'd 'em ; they were *Alive* in another State : And if they were Holy Persons, he had the like number in Heaven, as God gave him on Earth. It's a great Relief to a Christian Mourner to consider, that his Deceased Friends are not *Lost*, but *Live*. I know very well that the Holy Will of God must take place of mine : I know that I ought to love God and Christ above all, and absolutely resign my self, and All that's mine, or cannot hope to see his Face : I know that I shall shortly follow the *Desire of mine Eyes* : I hope I shall be silent, and adore, and not *charge God foolishly*. But methinks I know (with sensible supporting Influence from such a Thought) that *She is not Dead, but Sleepeth ; She is not Lost, but Lives* : And if I get to Heaven, shall meet her there, in the presence of the Lord our Redeemer. And then the *Company* of our Holy *Relatives* will be more *Sweet* than ever it was on Earth.

For though the Blessed Vision of God be our *Chieftest* Hope and Joy, yet the Presence of all the Blessed Spirits will make a *Real*, though Subordinate, part of our Happiness,
and

and Delight. "I am so far from doubting
 "whether we shall *Know* and *Love* one another
 "in the Heavenly State, that the Belief and
 "Expectation of it, is, or should be, one great
 "Motive why we love 'em so well now."
 If we thought we should not *Know* and *Love*
 them after Death, we ought to *Love* 'em but
 as Earthly, Transitory things, and not as
Heirs of Heaven, with such a Love as shall be
 perfected, and last for ever.

Neither can it well be imagin'd how the
 Process and Proceedings of the Judgment-
 Day, according to the Scripture Account of
 it, can be manag'd by *the Man Christ Jesus*,
 (or the Lord Redeemer cloath'd with Hu-
 mane Nature,) without our Knowledge of
 One Another in the *other* World, who were
 acquainted, and convers'd together in *this*.
 'Tis true, the present Relations by Marriages
 and Blood will then cease; but there is no
 reason to think, that the Remembrance of
 those Relations must also cease: Yea, their
 Knowledge and Remembrance of us, and
 their Affection to us, whom we knew, and
 lov'd in the Lord, is not like to be *abolish'd*,
 but *perfected by Dying*.

Doubtless the Angels who rejoyce at the
 Conversion of a Particular Sinner, and the
 Departed Saints too, do know more even of
 the State of *this* World, than we do, who are

* Mr. Baxter, Of the Knowledge of God, part 3. p. 331.

acquainted with so very little a part and spot of it. Which, by the way, should check an inordinate fond Desire, of living to see Glorious Times on Earth: For if we get to Heaven, we are like to know much more of those Happy Times, than if we remain'd alive in a Corner of the Isles of the *Gentiles*.

But as to our Mutual Knowledge in the Heavenly state: Shall those whom we Reliev'd on Earth, Welcome us to Heaven? And are therefore said to *receive us into Everlasting Habitations*, Luk. 16. And shall not the departed Saints know one another in Glory? Shall we then know, *as we are known*? And shall the *Thessalonians* be the Joy, and Crown, and Glory, and Rejoycing of the Apostle *Paul*, in the Day of Christ? And shall he not know them, or they him, who profited by his Ministry? Did the Rich Man in Hell know *Abraham* afar off in Heaven, and can we think a blessed *Lazarus* shall not? For though that be a Parable, there is some Truth as the Foundation of it. Shall it aggravate the Misery of lost Souls, to meet their wicked Companions in the place of Torment? as few deny, or doubt: And shall it not Rejoyce the Blessed, to meet their Holy Friends whom they knew in this World? Did *Peter*, *James*, and *John* know *Moses* and *Elias* in the Transfiguration, whom they never saw before? (and we read not that Christ told em 'who they were:) And shall those who were acquainted upon Earth,

Earth, and helpt one another to Heaven; utterly forget, and lose the remembrance of any such thing?

It is a pleasant Thought, (and proper to support under the Death of those we have honoured, and loved, and profited by, on Earth,) to think that hereafter we shall meet, and know, several Ministers of Christ, whose Preaching, and Converse, and Writings, have been useful to us: That we shall then meet, and know, several of our Holy *Relations* and Acquaintance, with whom we were wont to walk together to the House of God, and meet often at the Table of the Lord; with whom we conferr'd about the Misteries and and Promises of the Gospel, and many a time discours'd together of the Heavenly Inheritance; believingly to foresee, and consider, that though they are gone before, we shall meet 'em again, at the last great Supper of the Lamb, in the Celestial Kingdom.

And why may not I suppose such a distinct and personal Knowledge, and Remembrance of one another, as to be able to say, *This was the Person*, whom God employed to bring me into the World, and educate me in his Fear; who instructed my tender Years, and taught me early to Know the Lord. Or, *This was the Person*, who was at so much pains to convince me of my Sin, and reclaim me from the Errour of my Ways: *This was He*, or *She*, who tendred my Salvation as their own; who

E

watch'd

watch'd over me, and pray'd for me, and with me; and often told me of the Evil of Sin, of the Excellency and Pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways, of the Freeness of the Love and Grace of Christ, and his Willingness to receive Returning Penitents at first, and even Backsliders afterwards. *This was the Person*, who was assisted by God to encourage, strengthen, revive, and comfort my desponding, my doubting, my unbelieving Heart, and establish me in the way of Truth: Yea, to be able to say, *This was the Person*, with whom I lived, and sojourned in yonder World; whose sincere Affection I so much valued; whose delightful, useful Company, I so much prized, whose Sickness and Removal I so much lamented, &c.—— But lest I run too far, let me draw to a Close.

Let us therefore, after what hath been said, resolve to have *Communion* with them, though they are Departed; by Contemplating *what* they are, and *where* they are, and *what* they *do*, and *what* they *possess*; and by Rejoycing in their Blessedness, more than we would have done for their Temporal Advancement in any kind on Earth. Let us desire and endeavour to be *as like 'em* as we can, by imitating their Temper and Work above, in the Love of God, and the delightful thankful Praises of the Redeemer. When we look up to *Heaven*, let us think *they are there*. When we think

of *Christ in Heaven*, let us remember *they* are part of *his Family* above. When we think with hope of entering into *Heaven our Selves*, let us think with Joy of meeting *them* there.

"Oh welcome, welcome, happy meeting
 "with Christ, and them; Never more to
 "Part, never more to Mourn, never more to
 "Sin. *O Happy Change! O Blessed Society!*
 "(shall we then cry out,) with whom we shall
 "live for ever, to Know, and Love, Admire,
 "and Praise, and Serve our Common Lord!
 "We formerly Sinn'd together, and Suffer'd
 "together. But this is not like our old
 "Work or State: Our former Darknes,
 "Complaints, and Sorrows are now vanish.
 "This Body, this Soul, this Life, this Place,
 "this Company, these Visions, these Fruitions,
 "these Services and Employments, are
 "not like what we had in the former World.
 "And yet, which is the Quintessence and
 "Spirit of all, this Happiness shall last to all
 "Eternity, and after Millions of Ages be as
 "far from ending, as when at first began. *Fit us, Lord! for such a Day, and Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly. Amen.*

THE END.

Prepare to Follow.

OR THE
SECOND DISCOURSE
FROM

MATTH. XXIV. 44.

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H
OF

M^{rs.} Eliz. Gearing.

Prepare to Follow.

OR THE
SECOND DISCOURSE
FROM

MATTHE. XXIV. 44.

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

OF

M^r. ERIC GARRING.

Prepare to follow.

A
Funeral Sermon

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H

O F

M^{rs}. *Elizabeth Gearing,*

(Late Wife of Mr. *Henry Gearing,*)
who Departed this Life the second
of *July*, 1691.

By *JOHN SHOWER.*

2 S A M. 12. 23.

*But now he is Dead, wherefore should I fast ?
Can I bring him back again? I shall go to
him, but he shall not come to me.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *J. Dunton* and *A. Chandler.* 1691.

THOMAS J. BROWN

D. E. BROWN

Attest: Elizabeth C. Brown

(Last Will of Mr. Thomas J. Brown)
who Departed this Life on the 10th day of July 1871

BY ATTEST: Elizabeth C. Brown

Witness my hand and seal this 10th day of July 1871
at New York City

Elizabeth C. Brown

Prepare to follow.

OR A
DISCOURSE

FROM

MATTH. 24. 44.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not of, the Son of Man cometh.

UPON a like Exhortation of our Blessed Lord to Watchfulness, and Prayer, to Faithfulness, and Diligence, in Expectation of his Coming, the Apostle *Peter* makes bold to ask the *Question*, whether it concern'd only the Apostles, or was spoken to all, *Luke* 12. 41. The answer whereto doth sufficiently express the Universal Obligation of such a Duty. For our Lord replies, *Blessed is that wise and faithful Servant, who when his Lord comes shall be found doing his Masters Work.* And yet more expressly by another Evangelist, where the like Parable is apply'd with this addition, *What I say*

I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch; Mark 13. last. which *Watching* is the general Comprehensive word for being *Ready*. This is the repeated Voice of Christ in his Word, where-ever he speaks of his Second Coming: This is the distinct and loud call of his Providence unto this Congregation by the Death and Funerals of one of our number; you know, I mean our Friend Mrs. *Gearing*, which speaks the same language to all of us, *Be ye also ready*. And being desired on this Occasion, to preach from these words; I shall reserve the mention of some things, that were instructive and exemplary in the *Deceased*, for the close of my Discourse, and in the mean time consider this seasonable Admonition of our Blessed Lord, *Therefore be ye also Ready; for the Son of Man cometh in such an hour, as ye think not of.*

This and the foregoing Verses are part of the Answer, which our Saviour made to the Disciples question, in the beginning of the Chapter, v. 3. *Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the World?* According to the common Apprehensions which the Jews had of the alteration of the present state of things among them, by the coming of the *Messiah*, and that general destruction of the World, and the State of Eternity which would thereupon follow, they enquire of both together: as reckoning his Coming and the End

of

of the World, would be at once. And throughout this Chapter, we find our Lord's Answer to both Questions are intermixed; some whereof referr to the destruction of the Jewish State, and his coming to execute judgment upon that Nation: and others, to the end of the World, whereof the former was but a figure.

It is plain that some passages referr to the Jewish State, several of the signs of his coming were literally fulfilled, a little before their destruction by the Romans, as Josephus, and Tacitus, and others mention; particularly the 15. and 16. verses: *When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the Holy place, (who so readeth let him understand) then let them which be in Judea, flee into the Mountains.*

And again 34. v. he says: *This Generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled.* There is yet no reason to confine the whole of this Chapter, to the Calamities which befell the Jewish Nation, which was but as a Type and Representation of the general Judgment, preceding the final Doom of the World; for some passages do as plainly referr to the end of the World. As when he speaks, of his coming in the Clouds with power and great glory, and of the Angels sounding the Trumpet, and of two men in the Field, and of two Women grinding at the Mill, one taken, and the

the other left; referring to the great Discrimination of persons, that shall be made at the end of the World, as when it is said in the 36. verse, *Of that day and hour no man knoweth, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only.* And by another Evangelist, the Son himself is excluded from knowing that hour, *Mark 13. 33.* But did not Christ know the time of the destruction of the Jews, their Temple, City, and Nation? when he himself foretells the time, when it should be? And therefore those words in the 35. v. *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,* seem to be a transition from answering the first Question, concerning the Destruction of the Jews, to answer the other question, about the End of the World: whereupon follows the Exhortation in the 42. v. *Watch, for you know not what hour your Lord will come. But know this, (or you do know this, as the Original word will bear, and may better be rendered;) You do know this, That if the good man of the house had known, in what Watch of the night the Thief would come, he would have watched, and not suffered his house to be broken up: Therefore be ye also Ready, for the Son of Man cometh in an hour that you think not of.*

I hope none will be so weak, as to be stumbled at the Comparison in this passage of the coming of Christ unto that of a Thief, because the allusion is only as to the unexpectedness

Readiness of the time, and season of his coming. It is a comparison, or allusion, as one says, *Non persona ad personam, non negotii ad negotium, sed temporis ad tempus.* q. d. The parallel does not hold between Person and Person, between Business and Business, but only between the Time of the ones coming, and that of the other, (*viz.*) The Suddenness and Unexpectedness of it. In which sense the Apostle mentions the coming of Christ as of a *Thief in the Night*, at a time when he is not expected, *1 Thes. 5. 2. 2 Per. 3. 10.* Therefore be ye also ready, for He comes in a time when you think not of it. His last Coming, at the end of the World will be surprizing; and so is his other Coming to summon us out of the World by *Death*, which will transmit us over to his final Judgment. For nothing can be done to make us Ready, and prepared to meet him as our Judge, but on this side the Grave. Our readiness therefore for Death, and for the Coming of our Lord to Judgment, is all one.

In the words we have three parts. 1. The Certainty of Christs Coming again supposed. 2. The Suddenness and Unexpectedness of it asserted, it will be in an *Hour* *that you think not of.* 3. The Necessity and Obligation that results from thence, of endeavouring to be Ready. Accordingly I shall, I. Explain the Nature of this *Readiness*, for the

the Coming of Christ. II. Show the force of the *Argument*, in several Considerations, from the suddenness and unexpectedness of his Coming, and our uncertainty of the time thereof, therefore to be *Ready*. III. Shall assist you to make the *Application*.

I. The Certainty of his second Coming is supposed: *The Son of man cometh in an hour you think not of.* It supposeth then that he will come again. *The Son of man* is a title very often given to Christ, and assumed by himself, particularly with relation to the Final Judgment; for we read, that the Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son, and given him Authority to execute Judgment, as the Son of man, (or because he is the Son of man) and it follows, *For the hour shall come, that all they who are in their Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come out of their Graves, they that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Resurrection of Damnation,* John 5. 27, 28. And with particular relation to this, he himself speaks, *Mat. 25. 31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his glory. And when the High Priest adjured him, to tell whether he were indeed the Christ, the Son of God, Mat. 26. 63, 64. observe what he answer'd, Hereafter shall you see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Some would have it an instance of

of his Humility to assume this Title, as referring to the meanest of his present condition in the World; but that does not seem to reach the sense of the Expression, For *all Judgment is committed to him, because he is the Son of Man, or because He is Mediator; because He is the true Seed of the Woman, promised to bruise the Serpents head; The true Son of Man, to whom Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom was given by the Ancient of days, Dan. 7. 13, 14.* So that this Title is a Name of Office. All Supremacy, Authority and Power that belongs to the Office of Mediator, is given to him: And the Gentiles, as well as the Seed of Abraham, may by him be justified, and obtain everlasting Life. The Jews would appropriate the *Messiah* to themselves, as *the Son of David*, and the King of Israel, forgetting that he is *the Son of man*, promis'd from the beginning to be *the Desire of all Nations*, and the Hope of all the Ends of the Earth; to redeem us unto God, out of all Nations, Tongues, Kindreds, and People.

The coming again of this *Son of Man* is here supposed. [He came once as the promised Redeemer, to be incarnate in our Nature, and to offer himself a willing Sacrifice for the expiation of Sin: But he is to come again as the Judge of Quick and Dead; even this same Jesus who after his Resurrection conversed forty days upon Earth, and then ascend-

1-2

ascended in Triumph and Glory to Heaven ; *This same Jesus*, said the Angels to the two Witnesses of his Ascension, *who is taken up into heaven, shall so come again as you have seen him go into it*, Acts 1. 11. This was prophesied by *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam*, Jude 14. This was foretold, and prefigur'd variously in the Old Testament ; this was expressly promised by our Lord, in the days of his Flesh ; especially for the encouragement of his Disciples, when he was about to leave them, and speaks of his departure. This is insisted upon by the Apostles, in their several Epistles, as a Motive to Humility, to Patience, to Perseverance, notwithstanding the many difficulties, and discouragements, which they met with for their Fidelity to Christ, and the Gospel.

But I need not insist on the proof of this, among those who own it as a fundamental Article of their Creed ; That He who dyed on the Cross, and rose again, tho' he now sits at the right Hand of God, and the Heavens shall contain him 'till the Restitution of all things, yet *He shall come again to judge the World*, and determine the final Everlasting State of all Mankind. (But because he is not yet come, men are ready to conclude he never will ; because things continue as they were, one Generation passing, and another coming ; men that walk after their own Lusts, (whose interest it is to have it true, that he shall

shall not come, are ready to cry out in scorn, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. But for us to be ignorant that he will come again, must be a wilful, willing, chosen Ignorance: Because the *Lord is not slack*, as Men count *slackness*; but *a thousand years are to him as one day*: It is not Slackness, but Long-suffering, which should lead Men to Repentance, and to Prepare for his Coming: And so would be *Salvation*. For so it is called, from the tendency of it, *ver. 15*. And if it be not so to us, it is our own fault.

[So unquestionably *Certain* is this Appearance, and Second Coming of Christ, that the Apostle *Paul* adjures *Timothy*, in the most solemn and affecting manner, to the faithful discharge of his Duty, by that Consideration, *I charge thee before God, and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his Appearance, and his Kingdom*: or when he shall appear in his Kingdom, 2 *Tim. 4. 1*.

The Jews knew and granted, that the *Messiah* was to come as a Judge, by the Traditional Prophecy of *Enoch*, which began with those words, *The Lord shall come*. This they understood long before the Incarnation of our Saviour: So that they were wont to begin their Writs, or Instruments of the *Greatest Excommunication*, with those words of the Prophecy of *Enoch*, *The Lord shall come*. As if, besides all other Punishments,

they Bound over the Excommunicated Person to the last great Assize, to be Judged by the *Messias*. And the Apostle seems to allude to this, 1 Cor. 16. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha: i. e. Accursed with that great and terrible Excommunication, The Lord shall come.* For so they call it from the first words, as we often give Names to Writs, and other Instruments, by reciting the first words of them: *He shall come again: he shall be revealed from Heaven, in flaming fire, with his mighty Angels, to render vengeance to them which know not God, and obey not the Gospel, &c.* 2 Thel. 1. 7, 9. *We shall all be made to stand before his Judgment-Seat,* 2 Cor. 5. 10, 14. Rom. 14. 10. *And every one shall then give an account of himself to God, and receive according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. He is delegated and appointed by God for this Work, and every way fitted and qualified to undertake it,* Acts 17. 31.

II. The *Suddenness* and *Unexpectedness* of his Coming again: *The hour of it no man knows, no, not the Angels of God in Heaven.* It will surprize Mankind, as the Deluge did the Old World in the days of Noah. The time of it is lock'd up in the Treasuries of Heaven, and we have no Key that will open it. Neither the time of Christ's coming to Judge

Judge the World, or the time of his calling us by Death to come to him, is certainly known. *Behold! I know not the day of my death,* we may every one say with Isaac, Gen. 27. 2. The Knowledge of this time and Season he hath reserved in his own power; it belongs not to us, it is no part of our Priviledge to know it, *Acts* 1. 7.

If it had been fit and becoming, adviseable and expedient for us to understand it; if it had been for our Advantage, to know the precise time of our own Death, or of the Final Judgment; if it would have added any whit to our Spiritual Stature, and Growth in Grace; if it would not have much better promoted our Watchfulness, and serious Diligence, and forwarded our Preparations, to have remained Ignorant, he would not have drawn such a Veil over *that Day and Hour*: But would have left it written in fair Characters. But he every way consulted our Interest, and the general Good of the World, by hiding this Knowledge from us. God's Government of the World, and the Magistrates influence under God for the Good of Men, would very much be weakened, if every Man did certainly know beforehand the time of his Death. Our Usefulness to others would be very much check'd, and the necessary Preparation for being so, if we knew we should not out-live such a Year, or such a Stage of our Lives. Our Joys and

Sorrows, with respect to our Relations and Friends, would then be immoderate; our Carriage, in Prosperity and Adversity, would be more unbecoming; our Dependance upon God and his Providence, the Redemption of our Time, the Contempt of this World, and the Preparation for another, would all be very much hindered by the certain knowledge of the time of Christ's Coming to call us to Judgment. Therefore he tells us, *That in an hour we think not of, the Son of Man cometh.* It shall be suddenly, when he is not expected; and therefore *All should be Ready.*

It is sometimes represented by the *travailing Pangs* of a Woman with Child, which may over-take her at a distance from her own House, when she looks not for it, *1 Thes. 5. 3.* 'Tis set forth by the surprize of a Thief entring the Window of a House by Night, when the good Man of the House little expected him, *Rev. 16. 15. Behold I come as a Thief; blessed is he that watcheth.* And again we are told, *As a snare, shall it come upon all that dwell upon the face of the earth, Luk. 21. 35.* When Men are careless, and secure, and confident of Long-life; when they are busie in pursuit of great things for themselves in this World, when they are big with mighty Projects and Designs for hereafter, when they enlarge their Imaginations to contrive the Satisfactions, they shall have for many years
to

to come, in the Pleasures, and Dignities, and Wealth, which they count upon beforehand : when they say in their Hearts, *Our Lord delays his Coming* ; I have yet time enough to get ready ; Then shall this day overtake them, *when they think not of it* : The Lord of that *Servant will come in a day that he looked not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware*, Luk. 12. 46.

III. The *Necessity*, and Obligation of being *Ready*, because of the Certainty and Suddenness of the Coming of Christ. Where I shall, *First*, Consider the *Nature* of this *Readiness*, and Explain something of it. *Secondly*, Shew the Force of the *Argument*, and amplify it in several Considerations, to urge it the more effectually upon All to make *Ready*.

I. What is the *Nature* of this *Readiness* ? In the general, it is expressed by Two or Three Evangelists, under the term of *Watching* : Which, as the summary Preparation for the Coming of Christ, takes in all the Duties of a Christian, with respect to the Affairs of his Soul, and the Everlasting World ; as awaking out of Security, foreseeing our Danger, providing against it, carrying it suitable to the Expectation of the Appearance of Christ from Heaven ; Looking for, Waiting for, Praying for,

Hastning to, or *hastning of*, the Coming of the Day of God: It comprehends an awaken'd Heart, an active Faith, a lively Hope, a diffusive Charity, and persevering Diligence in all the Fruits of Righteousness: That we may perfect Holiness in the Fear of God, lay up a good Foundation against the time to come, and at last lay hold of Eternal Life: That we may have Confidence at Christ's Appearance, and be able to stand before the Son of Man, with exceeding Joy. This in general under the Name of *Watching*, and being *Ready*, is the Duty of all.

2. Besides this General Account, we may consider some of the *Particular Metaphors*, under which our Lord represents himself, (or is set forth in Scripture,) when he comes again.

First, As a Bridegroom. And so our Readiness consists, in our Accepting him, and Choosing him in such a Relation: *I have espoused you to one Husband, even Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 7. And we read of the *Marriage of the Lamb*, and the *Readiness of the Wife*, cloathed in *fine Linnen*, which is the *Righteousness of the Saints*, Rev. 19. 8, 9.

Now if you think you are ready for the Coming of Christ, under this Notion, ask yourselves, Hath there been any such Agreement between Christ and your Souls, which the

the Scripture represents by a *Marriage-Covenant*? Have you penitently and thankfully Accepted him for *Yours*? and given up your selves entirely to be his? To as many as have thus Accepted and Received him, He gives Power and Priviledge to become the Sons of God. Do you renounce all other Lovers? Do you prefer Him alone, abandoning all Competitors and Rivals? so as not to be for another, but for him, *Hof. 3. 3.* The like we read, *Psal. 45. 10, 11. Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, and encline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy Father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* Is there a Supream, Superlative Correspondent Affection, on your part to him, who hath said, That as a *Bridegroom* rejoyceth over a *Bride*, so will He rejoyce over Thee? *Isa. 62. 5.* Is this express'd by an entire Subjection to him, as the Head of his Church, and the Saviour of his Body? *Eph. 3. 23.* And this not for a time only, but for ever, *Hof. 2. 19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.*

The publick Solemnity of this Marriage will be at the Resurrection of the Dead, when he shall come again to conduct his Spouse to his Father's House, and more fully to evidence his Love, by the Mani-

festation of his own Glory. Our *Readiness* therefore for the Coming of Christ, implies our hearty Choice of *him*, and Consent to be *his*; to Love, Serve, Honour, and Obey him with Faithfulness, Diligence, and Perseverance to the end.

Secondly, Christ is represented as a *Householder*, and *Lord*; who is gone into a far Country, and hath intrusted his Servants with various Talents, which they are to employ according to his Order, and trade with for his Service, expecting to be accountable to him at his Return, *Luk. 19. 23*. Though our Lord be gone to Heaven, he hath left a Family upon Earth, and committed a *Trust* to every of his Servants. Now our Fidelity and Care in the Improvement and Use of our Talents, will be our *Readiness* for the Coming of Christ; under these Considerations we are to be Responsible to him for all the Blessings, Natural or Spiritual, that he hath committed to our Trust, and we have no Right in them any other way: We are but Stewards, He is the *Proprietor*, and Absolute Lord. And according to the number and kind of our Talents, he expects proportionable Care and Diligence, as good Stewards to manage and improve them. *For to whom much is given, of them much will be required.* Every one hath some Talents, some Trust; our Reason, and our Health,

Health, our Time, our Parts, Reputation, Estate, Interest, Authority, Power: All the Blessings of any kind that we have, are *Talents*, to be used for the Service of our Lord: And *Blessed is that wise and faithful Servant, who at his Lords Coming shall be found to have done so.* Our Faithfulness and Care herein, is our *Readiness* for his Coming. For he may demand an Account of our Stewardship, when we expect it not, *Luk. 16. 2.* Therefore if we would be Ready, we must be Diligent in his Work, and not bury our *Talents* in a *Napkin*, or waste our Lords Goods; but be found faithfully doing his Business in the Places and Relations he hath set us. In this consists that *Readiness* for his Coming, that will intitle us to the Blessing, *Luk. 12. 43.*

But lest it should be said, Who can come up to this? Who is able to be always thus diligently Employed? Who then can be Ready? Let us therefore,

Thirdly, Distinguish concerning this *Readiness*. There is an *Habitual* Readiness, and *Actual*: The one of our *State*, and the other of our *Frame*.

I. An *Habitual Readiness*, which concerns our State: When our Peace is made with God, so that she shall be found with him in peace, at the Coming of Christ, *2 Pet. 3. 14.*
When

When we have so put on the Lord Jesus, as at the Great Day we shall not be found naked, 2 Cor. 5. 3. When we are interested in the attoning Sacrifice of Christ, so as to be reconciled to God, and shall find Mercy of the Lord in the Great Day, Rev. 3. 17. Persons of this Character will manifest in their Course and Carriage, that they expect the Coming of Christ, by walking in all holy Conversation and Godliness, 2 Pet. 3. 10. *Denying all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, they will live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this World, as those that look for the blessed Hope, and glorious Appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Tit. 2. 12, 13.*

But because all that are Ready as to their State, and as to their general Course, are not so as to their Frame, therefore Consider,

2. There is an *Actual Readiness*, as to the Disposition of the Heart; which upon the near Prospect and Approach of any Messenger of Christ, to call us out of the World, is a Christian Duty. This *Actual Readiness* we should all endeavour after: That we may have greater degrees of that Readiness of Mind, and Preparedness of Spirit, to Obey the Summons and Call of Christ, tho' it should be with very little Warning; being Prepar'd, and Willing to go to him whensoever he shall call: *I am ready* (saith the Apostle) *to be bound at Jerusalem; yea,*

Prepare to follow.

91

to Die there for the Name of Christ, Act^s
21. 13.

All holy Persons (though *Habitually* ready) do not reach this : Some cry out with *David*, *Lord remove thy stroke from me ! spare me a little longer !* Psal. 39. Or as *Hezekiah*, when he received the Message of Death, *turn'd his face to the wall, and wept*, Isa. 38. But if we have Warning of the Approach of Death, we ought to stir up our selves *actually* to Prepare, to trim our Lamps, and set our Souls in Order, reviewing our Lives, renewing our Repentance, exercising our Graces, exciting our Hopes, recollecting our past Experiences, getting our Evidences ready, and the Promises on which we may venture our Souls in a dying Hour ; that we may say with old *Simeon*, *Now let thy Servant depart in peace : And with the Apostle Paul*, *I have finish'd my course, henceforth a Crown of Righteousness is laid up for me : And with our Lord himself*, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit : Or with Holy Stephen*, *Lord Jesus receive it.*

Christians ! Are we not too Unready, the best of us, as to Frame and Actual Preparation ? Do we sit as loose from this World, and all the Personal and Relative Comforts of it, that accommodate the bodily Life as we should ? Have we conquer'd the Fears of Death, and familiarized the Thoughts of the Grave, to that degree as we ought ? Is
our

our Love to Christ so sprightly and vigorous, that we could heartily welcome any Messenger to call us to him? Be the Instrument what it will, and the Manner and Circumstances of our Departure as God shall please, and the Warning never so short and sudden? Are we ready to go presently, at the first Call? That were it not for doing Service in our Places, (which God, who needs not our Help, can do by other ways,) we should rather choose *to be with Christ, as far better*. Could we Answer to such a Call of God, as *Samuel, Lord, here I am, thou didst call me?* O let me pass through the dark Valley! that nothing may keep me longer at such an uncomfortable distance from my Lord and Saviour, *that where he is, I may be, to behold his Glory*. This Readiness, Habitual and Actual, we have need to look after; because *the Son of Man comes in a time when we think not of him*. And therefore,

II. To urge your Diligence and Care to be Ready for the Coming of Christ, let me amplify and enforce the Argument in this Text, by several Considerations. As,

I. That *whether Ready, or not Ready, e're long our Lord will come*. Our particular Judgment by Death, which shall confine us to the eternal and final one, is at no great distance

stance. We are hastning to this Day of God, whether we believe, and mind it, or no: As Passengers in a Ship, to the end of their Voyage, whether they sleep or wake: whether we be wise Servants, or foolish; faithful Stewards, or unfaithful; whether we expect the Coming of our Lord, and Prepare for it, or do not: *He will shortly come,* and call us to an Account. O how soon shall you and I be gone! What a Change will a few days make in this City, and in this Congregation? We may judge of it, by what it hath made in few years past? In less than Twenty Years, what Changes in Families, and Churches, and Cities, and Nations? Husbands and Wives parted, Parents and Children, Friends snatch'd away out of the Bosom of their Friends: Those we loved, and lived familiarly with, Called before us, and gone home: And we are hastning after a pace, whether our Readiness and Preparation do, or do not, answerably hasten. One Relation, and another Acquaintance drops into the Grave: Some are ready, and some unready: One Pastor after another is removed to Heaven, and the Pulpits where they preach know them no more; and others will start up in our rooms, and are preparing to fill our Places, who succeed any of those, whose Funerals you Remember. And after a few *Lords's-Days* more, and at most after a few Summers and

and Winters more, you and I shall be called likewise, whether we be Ready, or not Ready.

2. When once thou art called to thy particular Judgment by Death, nothing more can be done to get Ready for the Coming of Christ, Eccl. 9. 10. John 9. 4. What, if you were now leaving this World? and how near and sure is such an hour! You would then be sensible, that *now* or *never* is the time to prepare, and get Ready. Awake therefore, and Mind it without delay, that you may not cry for more Time, when time is gone; and for the mercy of God, when it is too late. O how shall my unprepared Soul Appear before my God! How shall I pass into Eternity unready! What shall I do, to meet my Lord with Comfort! as if you had never heard till that time, that you must dye, and come to Judgment. O what Hearts of stone have Sinners, that can hear these things so often, and not resolve without delay to get Ready! That will not consider the Judge is at the Door, his Vengeance at their back, his Wrath pursues their sins, and woe be to them if it overtake them. Before their Friends have laid their Bodies in their Graves, or wrap'd them in their Burying cloaths, their Souls shall feel, that God is in earnest, and that *now* is the only time to get ready for Judgment.

3. When

3. *When men think not of it, and least expect his Summons, the Lord doth often come.* When thou art most regardless of Death, thy Head and Heart taken up with other things, the Hand-writing on the Wall may appear, and strike thee into a fit of trembling; a Voice from God may be heard, *Come away Man, or Woman! Come away,* thy Time shall be no more; this Evening, or the next Morning, this Night, or the next Day thy Soul shall be required of thee. Believe it, no Place, no Age, no Time, no Portion of thy Life, is certainly exempted. Do not then put off thy being Ready, lest thy Resolutions for hereafter should bare longer date than the time of thy Life.

4. *All the Time of our Lives is little enough, to get Ready for the Coming of Christ.* 'Tis little enough to learn to Live, says the Moralist, it is short enough be sure to learn to Dye. Ask those who have taken most Pains, and spent most of their Time to get Ready: Yet after all their Prayers, and Tears, after all their Watching, Striving, Running, and Preparedness, they complain they are *Unready* still; unready for the Spiritual Coming of Christ, when they are to meet him at his Table; much more *Unready* for his last Coming. Therefore let us give Diligence, that we may be found of him in Peace, without spot, and blameless. And

And if the question be seriously ask'd of all of you, one after another, Are you prepared for Death? are you Ready for the Coming of Christ? or are you not? How few will have the Heart, or Face, to say they are? The best will say, they need further Preparation: But what must they think, and say of themselves; who own they are habitually, as to their State unready; no way fit to Dye? I cannot say my peace is made with God: I have not yet enter'd into Covenant with him: I have not subjected and yielded my self to Christ: I have not taken on his Yoke, or I have cast it off, after I took it on: I am yet a Stranger to him, or I have shamefully left him after some Acquaintance? And will you put it any longer to the venture, when your Lord may call within an hour?

5. *God is now ready to Assist you by his Grace, if you will awake, and Mind your Work; but if you delay, he may justly refuse, and withdraw it.* And if once the case comes to that, you can no more make Ready for Death and Judgment, than if you were already dead; it being as possible for us to Repent without life, or after we are dead, as to Repent without Gods Grace, while we are living. Therefore they that promise for themselves, that they shall Repent, and Prepare for the coming of Christ, (some time here-

hereafter they resolve they will) they must not only promise for themselves, but for God too ; that he will wait their leisure, and dance attendance after them through all the Stages of their Delays ; and yet be as ready to assist them hereafter as now ; otherwise it is as uncertain, whether you shall Repent *hereafter* if you live, as whether you shall live to that hereafter, wherein you say you intend to Repent.

6. Consider, *How great and Important a thing it is to Dye, and to meet the Lord our Judge.* It is so even for good men that are *habitually Ready*, after such a life of sense, and the deep Impressions we are under by sensible Objects, after our many Backslidings, and actual Sins ; to look into the House of darkness, and think of lodging there ; to lay down these Bodies, to corrupt and Putrifie there ; to bid adieu to all our Relations, and take a solemn leave of all our Friends ; to think of passing thro' this dark Entry, through which as we go right or wrong, we are made or undone for ever ; to think of the Majesty, and Holiness of God, his Truth, and Justice ; to consider the strictness, and Spirituality of his Holy Law, and the awful Solemnity of the Tryal and Judgment, that all Mankind must come under : These and such things

consider'd, which are obvious to any considering man, make it no easie matter to dye, even for the best. But for an unprepared Soul, that is Unready as to his State, who hath done little or nothing, ever in his whole Life of such Work, no Expressions can describe the Terrors of that mans case; especially for careless, carnal Professors, that attend the preaching of the Word, and are deceived by the Devil, to think they are in the way to Heaven, while yet they live in secret Sin, and are Enemies to God; what killing disappointment will they meet with, one moment after Death? when they expect with the foolish Virgins, to enter Heaven, and find the door to be shut.

Sirs, believe and tremble! If you are not ready for the Coming of Christ, you are ready for his condemning Sentence, and ripe for Ruine. If you are not ready, as Vessels of Mercy prepar'd for Glory, you are ready, as Vessels of Wrath, fitted for Destruction. That Place and Portion which you are fit for, you shall have at Death. If you are not fit to be with Christ, if you are *not made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Life*, if you are not formed, and wrought by the Spirit of Christ, for this self-same thing, you shall have another Place, and Company, and Portion, with the Devil and his Angels, in

unquenchable Fire, where is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth for ever.

7. *You need not fear that you shall hasten your Death, by Thinking of it, and being Ready.* Christs Summons will not be hastened, tho' thy Preparation be. The stroke of Death will not be sooner, but the easier, and make Life, and Death it self sweeter, by now endeavouring to be Ready. You will not then be afraid of every Sickness, and threatening Danger that brings you to the borders of the Grave. They were the foolish Virgins, who were affrighted at the Midnight cry, *The Bridegroom cometh*, because their Lamps were out, and they had no Oyl; they were struck to the Heart, their Hopes dyed, and they presently sunk into Despair. But of such as are Ready, we find them speak of Dying as of an easie sleep; *I must put off this Earthly Tabernacle shortly*, saith one Apostle; *The time of my Departure is at hand*, and *I am ready to be offered up*, saith another, 2 Pet. 1. 14. 2 Tim. 4. 6. But as Christ will not delay his Coming, tho' thou be unprepared, so neither is thy Readiness for Death, a likely means to shorten thy Life.

8. Consider, *It is for this end, that our Lives are continued, and all the mercies of our Lives, that we may be ready.* What have you Life given you for? why were not you

cut off many years ago? but that you might have Time and space to Repent, and Prepare for the Coming of Christ? How many years have some of you been spared? It may be twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years? and yet after all you *are not ready*. What have you been busie about all this while? How have you employed your Time? What is the end of God, do you think, in all the merciful helps He continues you? Such as Ministers, and Books, Ordinances and Providences, your own Sickness, and others Funerals? You lose the benefit and use of all your Mercies of Life, Health, and Time, and some of you of Wealth and Honour, &c. of all the Sermons you have heard, of all the Providential warnings of God to Awaken you: you have lost them all, if they have not furthered your Readiness, for the Coming of Christ: And if you shall live many years to come, you must say it was all *lost Time*, and wish you had never had an hour of it, while this preparation for Death and Judgment is neglected.

9. Consider the *unspeakable Difference between a prepared and unprepared Soul, in a dying Hour*. The one is going to see the things he hath Believed, and possess that which he hoped for, and hath the promise of God, that he shall enjoy. The other

is going to feel, what he would not in time believe; to endure the threatned Wrath, he would not Fear, so as to escape. The one is come to the end of all his Prayers, and Patience, Labours, and Sufferings: The other, to the end of all his Ease, and Pleasure, Mirth and Joy. The one hath the promised Felicity, with God, and Christ, and all the blessed Spirits above, in view before him; the other hath Death and Hell, the Judgment of Christ, and an Eternity of Misery before him, ready to overwhelm his Soul. The one can look back with Comfort, and reflect upon his upright Holy persevering Obedience, mixt with Repentance for many Sins and Failings, and yet can hope in God for his acceptance thro Christ; the other must review his Heart and Life with horror and regret, and read over the black *Items* of his careless Impenitent Course, with Bitterness and Torment, and the fears of greater. The one is leaving this World, where he spent his days in preparing for Eternity, (tho he heartily laments, that he began no sooner, and minded it no more;) the other is passing into the invisible Eternal World, for which he hath made no provision. The one by Death shall be translated to a blessed State of Holiness, Love, and Peace, in the everlasting joyful Praises of God, his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; the o-

ther sort are passing into the Regions of Darkness and Despair, among Devils, and unholy miserable Souls, with whom they must dwell, under the Hatred and Curse of God, and the unspeakable Terrors of his Wrath for ever : O the difference between one that is ready, and one that is *unready* ! when the Summons from Christ shall come to call them both away. Consider this, endeavour to be Ready ; for the difference between one mans Death and anothers, depends on the difference between Heart and Heart, Life and Life, Preparation and Unpreparedness.

10. Consider, that all the Readiness you now can get, will be little enough to support your Souls, when Christ shall call. Our utmost Diligence to Prepare will not be too much, to enable us chearfully to commend our Souls into the Hands of Christ, in expectation of all the great and glorious things, which he hath Purchased, Revealed, and Promised. Then all the Grace you have treasured up, will be little enough, for that is a time to use it, not to get it. Our strongest Faith will hardly be sufficient ; the clearest Evidences of our Acceptance with God, will be no more than needs ; the most appropriating, particular, applicatory Faith, saying, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, will be little enough to give us confidence in a dying

ing Hour. You know of none can help you, if then you cannot look to Christ with hope. If the Devil say, this sinful Soul is mine, and Christ disown thee, and say so too, what shall overcome the fears of Death? No wonder if Doubts and Fears arise, from the weakness of our Grace, our Negligence and Remissness in the service of God, our Folly and Offences, and manifold Backslidings, our familiarity with this World, and natural Love of Life, no wonder if it be difficult to conquer all these. And how can that be done, if we be not now diligent to get Ready?

11. Consider for your Encouragement, that *Uprightness and Sincerity shall be accepted, as your habitual Readiness.* We are under a merciful Covenant, and serve a gracious Redeemer: we find by the parable of the wise and foolish Virgins, that tho the former, who had Oyl in their Vessels, had many faults; (for they slumber'd as well as the Foolish, when they should have been actually waking, and Watching,) yet they were not shut out of Heaven: and then your conformity to Christ shall be compleat, and your weak imperfect Graces shall be perfected.

12. Remember this also, that *if your diligent Preparation be a difficult Work, it is but*

for a little while. The allotted season to Watch, and Work, and Wrestle, to strive and run, and use all Diligence to be Ready, is not long. And Christ may say, *Will you not watch with me one hour? that you may lift up your heads with Joy at my appearing, and then dwell with me for ever?* O how soon will the labour of Repentance, and humble self-denying Diligence in our preparatory Work be all over!

Soon will all the Affairs of humane Life be over; all these little things which men call *Business*, be past and gone; those, I mean, of Trade and Money, of Farms and Merchandize, they will all be over ere it be long: So will the Difficulties and Trouble of holy serious Diligence, in making ready for the Coming of Christ be over too. Now we must Fight and Wrestle, and hold on unto Victory, but the time of Triumph is approaching: Now we must watch, and stand upon our guard, but the promised everlasting Reward, and Rest, is not far off: Now our Life is, or should be, a Life of Prayer, ere long we shall receive the full Answer of all our Prayers, and all our Enemies be under our feet, never to Disturb, or Tempt, or Disquiet, or Indanger us more for ever. It all depends upon our sincere and persevering Diligence, to get ready for the Coming of Christ.

The

The Improvement, which may be made of this, shall be, *First*, To Lament our great and manifest unpreparedness for this Coming of Christ.

1. *Many such as are truly sanctified, and have Oyl in their Vessels, are yet too Unready,* for want of frequent believing Consideration, concerning *this Coming of Christ*, and for want of *Actual Preparation* for it. How many are intangled with the Cares, and Hurry of worldly Affairs, to that degree, that they do not take Time enough, to retire and bethink themselves of the glorious Appearance, and Revelation of Christ from Heaven, and so their Faith is weak, and their Preparation slow. Alas! we are but *too unready*, our unmortified Affections to earthly things, and unbecoming Fears of our last Enemy, do plainly prove it. The many breaches between God and our Souls, by particular backslidings, tell us we are *Unready*. The vanity of our Minds and Spirits, discovered by an undue conformity to this World, shows that we are *Unready*. The excess of our Passions, upon Worldly Losses and Disappointments, attest it too plainly. The declension of lively Hope, unto which we are begotten and born by Regeneration, the grieving and quenching of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Adoption, and Earnest of our Inheritance,

ritance, show that we are yet too unready.

The Promises, on which we must venture our Everlasting Hopes, are not studied, and understood, digested, and applyed, as they should be, and therefore we are not Ready. Our Desires of the Coming of Christ, our Prayers for the hastning of it, our anticipated Joy in the fore-thoughts of it, are so low, and so imperfect, to what they ought to be, that they prove we are *Unready*. We do not Labour and Watch, Pray, and Hope, with a resolved persevering Zeal, and Constancy, for the *Grace* that is to be brought to us, at the Revelation of Christ, as those that are Ready for his Coming.

2. 'Tis further to be bewail'd, that *multitudes fancy, and suppose they are ready, when indeed they are not*. O how great is the number of such! who imagine themselves to be too well prepar'd already, to learn to Prepare. And therefore all the Warnings and Exhortations of the Word, make no impression on them, because they think themselves not concern'd, tho they have never accepted Christ, as the *Bridegroom* of their Souls, by an humble, penitent, unfeigned Dedication of themselves to him, to love, please, and obey him above all. And their own Consciences (if they would consider, reflect, and

and search) must tell them, that they are not *Faithful Stewards* of their many Talents, as expecting to be call'd to an Account.

3. *The general Unconcernedness of the most, about any such thing as this being Ready, ought greatly to be Lamented.* The most reckon it at that distance, they will not trouble themselves to enquire whether they be prepar'd, or no. Others are conscious of their own Unreadiness, and therefore do not care to think of Dying: Tho they know not how soon they may be called; for many younger, and more likely to live, have dyed this last Year. Parents may survive their Children, and lay those little parts of themselves in the Grave, before they make their own Beds there: Yet such is the powerful craft of Sathan to befool the Sinner, and such the deceitfulness of Sin to harden the Heart, that some of the most unprepared, make a shift to live in peace, tho they cannot tell but Death may open the Door into Eternity the next moment. They will not yet consider it, and apply it to *their own case*; they will not know, that *their Judge* is at the Door, that *their Day of Reckoning* is at hand, that they are hastening to the Tribunal of Christ, that *their Judgment* lingereth not, and their Damnation slumbereth not. One would wonder, what Apprehensions, and
Thoughts

Thoughts of these things, such careless Christians have, who durst not say they disbelieve, or deny the Scripture Revelation, and yet feel no correspondent Impressions answerable to the Nature, Weight, and Tendency of such things.

Let me ask thee, O man, that hast neglected hitherto to make Ready : Dost thou think, that Christ will receive thy departing Soul at Death, or no ? Will he acquit and own thee in the Judgment, or no ? What say'st thou, hast thou enquired, and examined, and made it thy business to know this ? and to make sure of it ? How is it, that thy Mind is fill'd with other Thoughts ? thy mouth with other Talk ? and thy Time employed about other things ? when thou art so near to the final Judgment of Christ, and seest so many Souls daily passing into another World ; and yet wilt not consider what shall become of them, and of thy self : but wilt continue to pursue some transitory Pleasure, or Profit, while God and Heaven are neglected, and Christ despised, his Favour lost, and thy own Soul lost, or in the extreamest danger of being so, because thou art *not Ready*. Canst thou think that Christ will *then* accept thee, if thou *now* neglect him ? Canst thou hope, that he will prove himself a Lyar, by owning such as he hath often declared he never will ? O pity your selves in Time ! that
you

you may not be denied his pity at last. The door of Grace is yet open, but how soon, how speedily may it be shut! if now you will not enter. O what an unspeakable Mercy is the offer from God, that *yes you may* enter! what would departed Souls, that dyed Unready, give for such a Call of God? Hold a little, Tremble, and Believe, and delay no longer.

For *Direction*, in the general, Since the Bridegroom will come, and it may be in an hour when you do not look for him, see that you have Oyl in your Vessels, and Lamps, as those that wait for the Coming of their Lord. If thou hast no Oyl, buy it; if thou hast, burn it; if thou hast no Wedding Garment, get one; if thou hast, put it on; if thou hast no true Love to God, never leave till the Holy Flame be kindled; if thou hast any in truth, exercise and use it, as one that expects the Coming of Christ. More particularly,

1. Seek *Reconciliation* to God, by a Covenant Dedication of your selves to God in Christ, accepting him as offer'd in the Gospel, and resigning, and yielding your selves unfeignedly, and without reserve, to be his.

2. Let the Work of *Mortification*, both as to Sin and the World, be progressive, and

and constantly carried on, that you may be found of him in Peace, as to your State, and without Spot, as to your Frame, as well as blameless, as to your Conversation; 2 Pet. 3. 14. Sit loose in your Affections from Earthly things, that Death may not rend and tear you from that, which hath the chiefest possession of your Hearts, for then you cannot meet the Summons of Death, but with an excessive Sorrow.

3. Be much in *Self-Examination*, that you may get over your Doubts and fears, concerning your Adoption, and attain to a more well-grounded Hope, and Assurance of the special Love of Christ. What will it avail us, to think we are Pardoned, and shall be saved, and e're long to find our selves mistaken when there can be no Remedy? You must now understand your danger, if ever you will be saved from it. And we have the same Rule and Law given to judge our selves by, that God will judge us by at last. Therefore retire, and examine your selves, whether you can observe the Seal and Earnest of the Spirit of Grace upon your Hearts; whether you can review your Conversation and Course, as transacted in simplicity and godly Sincerity, as in the sight of God, under the conduct of the same Spirit? whether this sanctifying Spirit hath drawn out your Desires
after

after Holiness, and your Love to God, his Word, his Worship, and his Servants, so as to wean you from the World, and make you place your Hopes and Happiness above, choosing God for your only Portion and Christ for your Teacher, Saviour and Lord; enabling you to live with sincere Desires, and Endeavours to please and honour him, in the believing expectation of what he hath purchas'd and promised, preferring the Hopes of it before all the Pleasures, and Advantages of Sin, and the present Life. And if upon serious search, your Hearts condemn you not, you may have confidence towards God: But how can you know these things without Examining? and how can you have this confidence, without such a Knowledge? and how can you think of the Second Coming of Christ with comfort, without some such good Hopes thro' Grace.

4. You should likewise, Endeavour to carry it in every *Relation* and *Condition*, as expecting to be called to an Account, when your Lord shall come. Do nothing now, but you would be willing to hear of then; nothing that you would be ashamed, or afraid to have ript up, opened, and discovered in that Day. Think with your selves often, Is this that I am now doing, the Life which I now lead, the Designs that

that I now pursue, such as will be sweet, or bitter to be remembred, when Christ shall come? will it be to my Shame or Honour, to my Joy or my Confusion, in the Day of Reckoning, when I must stand before my Judge? How many Temptations to sin might this repell? How many necessary Duties might this awaken us to perform, especially toward *Relations*?

It may now be a terrible thought to some of us, to consider and foresee that those of our *Relations* whom we most tenderly Love, are like to fall under the condemning Sentence of Christ, and perish Eternally. You can hardly bear up now under the weight of such a thought: will you not then awake, to Counsel, Warn, Reprove, Exhort, Admonish, and Intreat them, and do all you can to prevent it? But if they will not hearken, your Faithfulness shall be your Comfort, and their Condemnation shall not diminish your Happiness, tho' it will aggravate their Doom if you have done your Duty. I will instance in *one Relation*.

Suppose a Wicked Child, to behold his Parents on the Right Hand of the Judge, (one or both of them) owned by Christ, rejoycing in his Love, and taking part with him, so as to be pleased with the Execution of his Righteous Sentence, without any such Bowels of Pity toward them, as

now

now they feel: And if we could imagine them to discourse together, how might Holy Parents mind them of the various Methods they used to prevent their Ruine; and of all the Counsels, Reproofs, and Prayers, with which they follow'd them from year to year. "I begot thee, or "brought thee forth; I laid thee in my "Bosom, I carried thee in my Arms; I "took care of thee in Infancy; I instructed "thee in Childhood; I look'd after thy "Education; I brought thee to the publick Assemblies; I put thee upon Secret Prayer; I warn'd thee of thy Danger by bad Company; I urg'd thee to flee youthful Lusts; I told thee what would be the End and Issue; I forewarn'd thee of this day; and of the Everlasting Destruction that Christ had Threatned; and of thy too late Repentance in the other World; and that hereafter I should see thee condemned to Hell, without being able to pity thee. And *now the Case is thus*, I cannot but approve the Righteous Sentence of the glorious Judge; for thou wouldest not prepare, and get Ready for this Day, notwithstanding thy many Warnings and Calls from God and Man to do it.

Moreover, §. Labour to strengthen Faith concerning the *Certainty* and *Glory* of Christs

Appearing, and the most important awful *Consequences* of it, both to the *Righteous*, and to the *Wicked*.

1. As to the *Certainty of his Coming*. Unbelief is at the bottom of our neglect to make Ready. We do not consider the confirming Reasons of the Truth of the Gospel, and beg the Light and Influence of the Spirit, to persuade us fully of this foundation Article. We take up with the name of Faith, and do not Believe; with a notional weak, ineffectual Faith, that may dwell in the Hearts of Hypocrites, or Devils; and therefore feel no influence by it to excite our Hopes, or Fears, or Preparation.

Did we indeed believe it, as an unquestionable Truth, *that Christ shall come again to judge the World*, we could not but Fear to be found Unready: For whatever the distance be between this and that, Our Faith would represent it *near*, as if the thing were present; as if we saw the Redeemer in the Clouds, with the glorious Retinue of Blessed Angels, and ten thousand of his Saints: It would realize the Solemnity of his Tribunal, the Books being opened, and the Wicked trembling before their Judge, and the Righteous justified, and rejoicing in the Approbation of their Saviour.

Did

Did we believe it *Certain*, we should often put the Question, How shall I appear and stand in the Judgment? How shall I give an account of all my Talents? What shall I answer when I am call'd to his Bar? what shall I do to be befriended, when I am tryed for my Life? Therefore beg that God would fix a believing sence of this upon your Hearts; that your Faith may be *the Evidence of things not seen*: That you may believe it as firmly, as if Dooms-day were already come, as if you heard the Trump to sound, and that Amazing voice, *arise ye Dead, and come to Judgment.*

2. Strengthen and increase Faith, concerning *the Glory of the Second Coming of Christ*, as well as the *Certainty* of it. He shall be revealed from Heaven, with visible Glory in flaming Fire, with his mighty Angels, so that every Eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him. He shall come again *with Power and great Glory*, and the voice of the Arch-Angel shall awaken the World, and fill them with an awful Reverence of their Glorious Judge. He that stooped so low at first, to be cloathed with a mean disguise, and to glorifie the Father in the form of a Servant, by the Sacrifice of himself for our Redemption, shall be publickly Honoured in the view of all Mankind.

At his first Appearance he was a *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief*, he made himself of no Reputation, was *despised and rejected of men*; but he shall come again, openly to vindicate himself from the Contempt of his Enemies: *Every knee shall bow before him, and every Tongue confess him to be Lord*: And they who affronted his Throne, and lift up the Heel against him, shall be made his Footstool. At first he appear'd with all the sinless Infirmities of Humane Nature, but shall a second time with all the Demonstrations of the Divine Power, and Godhead.

3. How awful and important will be the *Consequences* of his Coming to all Mankind?

1. *To the Wicked.* With what Amazement and Confusion, with what Fear and Horror, with what Dread and Trembling, shall they, as guilty Prisoners, be made to stand before his Judgment Seat? What killing despair will seize their Hearts? what Paleness and shadow of Death will cover their Faces? what Convulsions, and gripes of Conscience will then torment them? Where can they go? where can they hide? How can they appear? How can they avoid appearing? What can they say? How can they answer the Charge? or deny

ny the Accufation? or evade the Sentence? or put off the Execution for a day? or bear it for a Moment? Since they can never efcape the Tryal, or corrupt the Judge, or be pardon'd after Judgment, or get the Sentence to be reprieved, or the Execution deferr'd. It will *then* be in vain to cry for Mercy, for now the Day of Vengeance without Pity, and of Judgment without Mercy, is come: what Friend wilt thou go to then? where are they? who can plead for thee, or fave thee, but he that will not? I would not for ten thoufand Worlds, appear in thy Cafe, among thofe that fhall then be found *Naked*, and *Unready*. And are not thefe things fit to be now confider'd, believ'd, and prepared for? What is all the Buſineſs and Affairs of this World? What but a Play, a Game, a Trifle, to theſe things?

2. *To the Righteous.* The Bridegrooms departure is not upon a Divorce: He ſhall come again, to be glorified in his Saints, and be admired of all them that believe. They ſhall ſee him and meet him in the Air, and ſay, *Yonder is He* whom our Souls Love; yonder is the bleſſed Jeſus, who once came from Heaven, to dye for us, and now comes to bring us to Heaven: we believed his Word, and behold now he

comes to make it good. They shall hear his absolving Sentence; their Persons shall be justified; their Cause shall be pleaded; their Sins shall be blotted out; their Sufferings, and Sorrows shall all be ended. They may therefore rejoyce in hope, and lift up their Heads in expectation of that Day; for the blessed Sentence shall ravish their Hearts, when they shall be bid to *Enter into their Lords Joy*: And hear those endearing Words, from the great Redeemer, *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, take Possession of the Inheritance prepared for you.*

Let us therefore pray for the Second Coming of Christ, and the hastning of it, as all Believers under the Old Testament and New, have done. And in this posture, Watching, Praying, Waiting, and preparing for his last Appearance to Judgment, we should be Ready for his particular Coming to us by *Death*.

Lastly, Let us improve every Warning of Divine Providence, every Death and Funeral of our Relations, and Acquaintance, to promote our own Readiness to follow. This is the Language of the late Providence that occasions this Discourse. This is the voice of God, by every breach he makes in our own, or our Neighbours Family. Be you also

also Ready: for you know not the Hour, when the Son of Man comes. We lose the Examples, and Holy Lives of our deceased Friends, for want of Imitation; and we lose *their Deaths* too, if we be not awakened to prepare for *our own*. But alas? How soon do the Impressions wear off, of such awakening Spectacles? It may be the ghastly looks, or dying groans of dear Friends, or departing Relatives, gasping out their last breath, and just passing into the other World, for the present may affect us a little: It may be when we see an open Coffin in our own House, or a Grave gaping to receive the Body of one we knew, and loved, and lately conversed with, this may move and startle us a little: It may be when we behold the mournful Looks, and Habit, the Funeral Pomp and Solemnity, that attends them to the House of Darkness, some serious Thoughts are excited; our Minds are aw'd into some reflections upon our own Mortality. But when the Ceremony is over, and we are gone from such a Spectacle; when the Dead are buried out of our sight, and we engag'd among the living World again, how soon alas! is all this forgotten? and how few are Gainers by such a Loss, in the manner they should be, *i. e.* To take the Warning, to be Ready, and Prepared for the Coming of Christ to

us, which is as sure, as if we were already dead.

One Help to get Ready our Selves for Death and Judgment, is to consider and improve the Death of Others. Either of such, who were called, and not Ready, whose case speaks loudly to us not to delay, and trifle as they did; or of such as were Prepared, and fit to Dye, their Death hath also the like voice of that in the Text, Be you also Ready. Our Deceased Friend, Mrs. Gearing, I am perswaded was of this latter sort.

§. 1. **I** Know very well, that the praising of the Dead hath been scandalously abused, as a more close way of flattering the living Relations, and therefore would be cautious what I speak on such Occasions: But the Honour of Gods Grace is not a little concern'd in the Honour of those, in whom it did remarkably appear: and he hath promis'd, that they who serve, and follow him, shall be honoured. To mention what was really imitable and praise-worthy, needs no Apology, or Excuse; the matter carries its own Justification.

§. 2. You of this Congregation could not but observe her Diligence and Constancy in attending
on

on the Publick Worship of the Lords Day, and to show forth the Lords Death every Month, in the other Solemnity of the Supper. Her early Attendance here, before the publick Worship began, tho' she liv'd at a more remote distance than many of you, is not unworthy of your Imitation.

§. 3. Her strict Seriousness in Family-worship, and Closet Duties, by which the Life and Vigour of practical Godliness is to be kept up, they who knew her best, were well acquainted with.

§. 4. There was one thing in her daily Course, which should shame and awaken most Professors, viz. the Conscientious daily practice of Self-reflection, and Examination; reviewing and calling over the passages of every Day in the Evening. She made Conscience every Night, to look back on the Duties she had performed, and the Manner of 'em; on the Mercies she had receiv'd; on the Errors, Weaknesses, and Omissions, she had been guilty of, &c. in order to Repentance, or Thanksgiving. Oh that there were more of such, concerning whom this may be truly said! We should be more Ready for the Table of the Lord every Month, and more Ready for the presence of Christ at the Hour of Death, if we did thus review the Actions of every Day, at the close of it.

§. 5. Not

§. 5. Not to insist upon her Faithfulness, and Prudence, Tenderneſs and Affection, Affability, and Friendly Carriage in every Relation, with divers other things very Commendable in her Life. I ſhall only take notice of a few things concerning her laſt Sickneſs, which after ten days determin'd in Death.

§. 6. Her Patience, Submiſſion, and Reſignation was answerable to the other part of her Character and Deportment; that is, truly Chriſtian. When ſometimes (by intervals) her Diſtemper did affect her Head, as ſoon as ſhe recovered the uſe of her Underſtanding, and a compoſed mind, very pertinent and earneſt Supplications to Heaven, diſcovered the holy Seriousneſs of her Heart and Frame. When ſhe could hardly ſpeak more than Yes, or No, yet ſhe did ſufficiently ſignifie her Aſſent, and cordial Approbation of any ſeaſonable Religious Diſcoſe, that was made to her.

§. 7. She owned her Hope and Truſt in the Mercy of God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, for Pardon and Eternal Life; and under the diſorders of ſo painful and violent a Fever, yet acknowledged ſhe had Peace within.

§. 8. The day before ſhe dyed, ſhe told a near Relation, that ſhe had a great work to do on the
morrow:

morrow: And when it was replied, that 'tis true, It is a great and difficult Work to dye; yet one moments Enjoyment of God in Heaven will make amends for all: She very affectionately cries out, I, so it will: I know that my Redeemer lives, and that I shall go to him, and be with him.

§. 9. The Evening before her Departure, after I had prayed for her, in the presence of several Relations and Friends, and seriously endeavour'd to commend her Soul into the hands of Christ; I ask'd her, Whether Jesus Christ were not the Chiefest of ten thousands to Her; whether she did not desire and prize him above all; whether she had not given up her self to him, again and again, with all her Heart and Soul, entirely, and without reserve; and endeavour'd (humane Infirmities, and Backslidings repented of, excepted) to walk and live as a Follower of Christ, under the Conduct of his Spirit, and according to the Rule of his Word, and some other such Questions, that might assist her to discern the Truth of her Grace, &c. She answered in the Affirmative, with extraordinary Modesty, Humility, Thankfulness and Affection: And gave me her hand at Parting, with thanks for my Prayers and Assistance, begging of God the best of Blessings for me and mine, which were her own words.

§. 10. Af-

§. 10. After which, in a difficult struggle with the King of Terrors, we hope and trust she was supported by the Everlasting Arms of that Powerful Grace of Christ, who hath conquer'd Death, and him that had the Power of it, the Devil. So that we may now say, O Death where is thy Sting, &c. God grant those lively impressions of Death, and another World, which the Relations then present seem'd to have on that occasion, may not easily wear off, or lose their proper Influence!

And now, Christians, let us mix our Sorrows for our Deceased Friend, with the Joys of Faith, on the account of her being made meet and ready for the Presence of Christ. Some Sorrow is allowable, were it but as Death enters into the World, as the fruit of Sin: But she being Prepared for Death, and made meet for the Promised Blessedness, beyond the Grave, that ought to be the matter of our Joy, which we believe is so of hers. And do we not ourselves Hope, (and have we any better, greater Thing we hope for, than) to possess that Happiness with Christ, which we believe she is possessed of? Is it not then unreasonable, to make that the Subject of immoderate Mourning, and excessive Lamentation, as to our departed Friends, which is the principal matter of Hope and Comfort, as to our own Souls? And shall

we for the sake of a lesser good, which we suppose to our selves by their living longer, desire to deprive them of a Greater, which they cannot attain but by dying? Let us rather be awaken'd, edifi'd, and encourag'd by their Examples, who by Faith and Patience, and Perseverance, are gone to inherit the Promises: and by their Funerals be excied to foresee and make Ready for our own. Oh that the Call of God, by this Breach among us, may be understood and obeyed! For this it speaks to every one in particular, Be you also Ready. Amen.

THE END.

2

The SAINTS *Desire*
to be with CHRIST.

A

SERMON

PREACHT

Upon the DEATH

OF

Mrs. *Ann Barnardiston,*

(DAUGHTER of

Nathanael Barnardiston, Esq;
late of Hackney.)

THE
OF THE
IN THE

ST. RAYMOND

UPON THE D. H. A. T. H.

BY
THE
OF THE
OF THE

A
SERMON
PREACHT

Upon the DEATH
OF

Mrs. *Ann Barnardiston,*

(DAUGHTER of
Nathanael Barnardiston, Esq;
late of *Hackney :*)

Who Departed this Life the 30th. of
Decemb. 1681. at the Age of Seventeen.

With a brief Account of some Remarkable
Passages of her LIFE and DEATH.

By *John Shower*, Minister of the Gospel.

*Psal. 103. 15. As for man his dayes are as grass:
as a flower of the field so he flourisheth.*

*V. 16. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone,
and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *J. Dunton* and *A. Chandler.* 1691

SEER MON

THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

TO

The much Honoured,

Mrs. *Elizabeth Barnardiston.*

MADAM,

THe sad Occasion of the *Sermon*,
and your Relation to *Her*,
whose Dying Request was fulfilled in my Preaching it, doth
style the Dedication yours. Though
what I have mention'd of your Excellent *Daughter*, is less than others would
have said on the same Subject, yet
having given an Account of her Preparedness and Willingness to Dye, methinks that should be considered as a
sufficient Argument to mitigate your
Sorrow, and prevent its Excess. 'Tis
the Apostles Instruction concerning them
who sleep in *Jesus*, that we ought not to
sorrow as do others, who have no hope.
Such were the *Egyptians*; and 'tis ob-

The Epistle

serv'd of them, that *they* mourned longer for the death of old *Jacob*, than his own Son *Joseph* did. I know the *Time of her Death* gives an Accent to the Calamity : That before your Mourning Weeds were laid aside for one of *the best of Husbands, who hath a good Report of all Men, and of the Truth it self*; you should be forced to continue the same, or put on more, for the *Loss* of *such a Child, in the Prime of her Youth, and Strength, and Beauty* : *A Loss* for which you do not mourn alone, since many others are partners of your Grief; not by sympathy only, as pitying you, but from a due Respect and Affection to her, and their own Concern at her Departure.

But as your *Afflictions* abound, God can make your *Consolations by Christ* abound much more : And such *Losses* as these, (though some of the smartest and most afflictive to humane Nature) may turn to your *Spiritual Gain* : And even *this Rod*, like that of *Aaron*, may blossom, and produce the *peaceable Fruits of Righteousness* : If in the want of their Company, God himself be more depended

Dedictory.

pended on as *your All in all* : If their removal out of this World promote your Mortification to it ; if their being taken up to Heaven, assist your Preparations, and excite your Desires to follow : God hath already made good his Covenant Promise, in a very peculiar manner, to those whom he *gave*, and hath *taken* from you ; and I trust will do so as to those who remain : that they may *know and serve the God of their Fathers with a perfect Heart, and see the Felicity of his Chosen* ; That they may tread in the steps of their departed Relatives, and bear up the Name of God in their respective Stations ; to his Glory, and your Comfort, and their Salvation. And if God should not *make your House to grow, yet he hath made an Everlasting Covenant with you, well ordered in all things, and sure*, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

I wish the following Discourse may contribute any thing to your Support : or at least be accepted, as an Expression of my Obedience, in complying with your request thus to make it publick : And as a Testimony of my unfeigned

The Epistle, &c.

Respect to the *Memory* of the *Deceased*;
with a serious desire of some benefit to
others also, by such a *remarkable Instance*
of an *Early Piety*, of an *Exemplary Life*,
of a *peaceable Death*: Which God grant,
who alone can bring Good out of Evil;
all whose Works are perfect, and whose
Wayes are Judgment. I am,

London, Jan.
25. 168¹.

MADAM,

Your most Affectionate

Humble Servant,

John Shower.

TO

TO THE
READER.

Reader,

I Being Earnestly desired, both by the Relations of the Deceased Gentlewoman, and by the Preacher of the following Funeral Sermon, to Testifie what I knew of the Gracious and wonderful workings of the Holy Spirit upon the Heart of this Person during Her Life; I could not but yield to their Importunate Requests.

And upon this Occasion I must declare, That having Known her from her Childhood, and having very much observed her Conversation of late, and being called to give her several Visits in her sickness, I do believe (upon the whole) that God did give her a sound Repentance for, and a Full Remission of all her sins, through the Mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I can assure thee, Reader, who ever thou

To the Reader.

art : that she had an awakened sight of her sins, accompanied with a great measure of Godly Sorrow for them : I discerned also in her a deep Humiliation, and I heard her open her self-Condernnation thereupon. I found in her also a clear Knowledge of the Nature of the New Covenant, together with a Right Apprehension of the Nature of that Faith, which is required of all men, (and is through Grace bestowed upon some Penitents) whereby the Soul doth attain to an Interest in that Covenant : It being, thereby, united unto Christ ; and consequently, doth partake of the Benefits of his Merits, and doth receive the Fruits of his Atonement, with the Inhabitation of his Spirit.

Saving Faith and True Repentance are alwayes inseparable ; and their Conjunction doth evidence and speak them to be true and saving ; both These (I do believe) were united in the Soul of this deceased Person : And therefore I have very great Hopes of her State. All Faith which is pretended to, where Repentance is wanting, I account to be nothing but a presumptuous Confidence ; and all seeming Repentance, which is not Accompanied with some Faith in the Divine Good-

To the Reader.

Goodness, and in the promises made thereof (by our Lord Jesus) is no other than the Repentance of a Cain, or a Judas his despair.

Our Lord Jesus did (as it were) Epitomize the whole Gospel, and comprehend the whole Duty of Man in two words, viz. Repent and Believe: and 'tis to be observed, that these two are set in the very Front, as the Text to all his Ministry, Mark 1. 15. And by reason of the Import of them, they may be accounted as the Contents of the whole.

Where these two Graces are not conjoyned, Guilt Remains, and Sin Reigns: But where they are united in any Soul, as that Person is Justified, so that Heart is savingly changed, and that Nature is in measure Sanctified; and the Life of that Man (for the future) will be proportionably, universally Holy. Would the Genius of the present Age allow me to use Metaphors in Soul-concernments, I should think that I did then best explicate to vulgar Capacities the Nature of saving Faith, when I did call Faith the Daughter of Knowledge, the Sister of Repentance, and the Mother of Love; for the Holy Ghost tells us, that Faith comes
in

To the Reader.

in by Hearing, Ro. 10. 17. That it Purifies the Heart, Acts 15. 9. and works by Love, Gal. 5. 6.

That God had given this Person the True Seed of such a Faith, was evident by its Fruits : The Apostle tells us, that he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Ro. 8. 9. And also he tells us, that as many are led by the Spirit are the Children of God, Ro. 8. 16. Now I must profess that (so far as I was able to Judge) I have seldom seen a dying person, manifest more of a Christ-like Spirit than she did : That is, I never saw more of a Spirit Thirsting after Communion with God, of a Spirit more contemning the World, of a Spirit more deeply bowing unto the Will of God, or a Spirit more patient under the Cross ; and more Submitting to the Rod of God.

Indeed I knew once a Person that did exceed her herein, and it was her Renowned Father : A Man of the greatest and most deserved Name, for Piety and Sincerity, for Humility and Patience, of all Men, in or Near the City, that I have known : Who Feared no Pain or Torture upon any other account, but this only, viz. Least they should tempt him to the least unbecoming Groan,

To the Reader.

in some great paroxysme of the Stone.

The Submitting of our Wills to Divine Will and Pleasure in all things, is the summe and substance of all Practicall Religion here ; and the full conforming of our wills to the divine will and mind, is the height and Top of all mans Happiness hereafter : To enjoy this Priviledge of full Conformity to God, is the Portion of None in this World ; and to perform that Duty of submission to him, is the Attainment of but very Few ; yet this deceased Person was so great a Favourite, as that God was pleased to bestow this rare Jewel to be worn in her Bosom, who did seem with John to Lye very near the Heart of her Saviour.

Very signal and Conspicuous is the discriminating Grace of God, towards some Persons more than towards others : 'Tis true, that God is not wanting to the Happiness of any of his Creatures : and his absolute Sovereignty seems in all things to be governed by his Infinite goodness ; so that, he is both Just, and good to all : yet there is nothing more notable, or more evident, than that there are some objects of his Love, who are his Segulais, his peculiar ones : in whom God doth especially delight ; and un-

To the Reader.

to whom God doth do good with his whole Heart, Jer. 32. 41.

As God doth suffer most men to make their own choice, and doth bestow upon them what they do fully and Finally choose: so he will himself choose as he will, and he will do with his own gratuitous favour as he himself pleaseth; and he will give no account to any of his own matters.

A great Instance hereof was this now blessed person, of whom I may say, that her whole Life was full of Gods goodness; and that Mercy and Truth did follow her even all her dayes; which dayes, the favour of Heaven would not suffer to be many; because it did ordain, that her Sorrows and her Temptations should be but Few.

Time being nothing but a dressing Room to Eternity; the shorter it is, the sooner do Holy Souls enter into the more immediate presence of the Glorious Majesty.

It is Reckoned in holy Writ, as an act of very Great kindness shewn by Hegai (the Kings Chamberlain) unto Esther, that all things necessary for her Purification, and for her due preparation, for the love of her designed Husband (The great King Ahasuerus,)

To the Reader.

shuerus,) were given to her more speedily than to others : whereby a Quicker access to the King was afforded her ; and the Crown was so much the sooner set upon her Head.

The good Spirit of God did deal something after the same manner, with this young Virgin : For the work of Sanctification was hastened in her, that she might the more early receive the Crown of Glory, from the King of Kings : and might be presented holy and without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Few pages, and fewer hours allotted me for this work, will not permit me to enumerate the many special favours that were shoured down upon this person while she lived.

I shall not therefore take notice of the priviledges of her Birth, or the Honour of her Family, which were great ; neither will I mention her Natural endowments, of parts, or Beauty, or any such thing : Blessed be God, that she her self (though young) had learned before her death, to reckon such enjoyments as these, to be very mean and poor, when compared with the Joys that were set before her.

They

To the Reader.

They are Love-tokens of a greater value, which I did observe to be conferred upon her; and these were such and so many, That I may say that she was one of those that God had blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ: and I may adde with the Apostle, that God having chosen her in him before the Foundation of the World, to be holy and without Blame. And the same God having decreed the End, did also ordain the Means.

Accordingly, in the First place the kindness of God appeared in ordering, that she should be born of, and brought up by very Pious and Religious Parents; and few persons did ever enjoy more Spiritual Nurture and Admonition, or had a greater stock of Prayers laid up for them, than this Gentlewoman and the rest of that Offspring.

Another singular Mercy, which did promote her Salvation, was the excellent pattern, of modesty, virtue, and piety which was afforded her by her elder Sisters. The Influence of a Good Example is alwayes greatly Advantageous: but when it is found in near Relations, 'tis much more obliging and efficacious.

Another great Blessing, much conducing

To the Reader,

to her Eternal Happiness, was this, that in her youth, she enjoyed the privilege of Attending upon such an eminent Ministry ; that the very Enemies thereof, have been heard to Confess, that it is very Learned, and most Rational, and further they knew not : but such as are Taught of God, and have their spiritual senses exercised, so as to be acquainted, not only with the form of Godliness, but also with the Power thereof, these men do say, that the Character which the others do give of this eminent persons teaching, are most true ; and they do further also say, that it is extraordinary Clear and convincing, most Evangelical and Scriptural ; greatly practical and profitable, and yet very Sublime and Spiritual.

Now Reader consider, whether many (if any) such have finally miscarried ; whose Natures were gentle, and easie to be entreated ; whose hearts were Soft and Tender ; who had the Benefits of such Education, and such Example ; who enjoyed such Teaching abroad, as well as such Counsel at home ; and all, accompanied with fervent Prayer unto God for a Blessing, which I am sure that she did not want : it being
reported

To the Reader.

reported of her Father, that his Custom was (with the Psalmist, 119. 164.) Seven times a day to pray unto the Lord, and to praise him. Moreover, I am informed, that this deceased Gentlewoman was observed to spend much time in Closet Prayer of late; consider then, I say, whether we may not hope confidently, that the Grace of God had savingly and effectually wrought upon her; who was both visibly in Covenant with God; and whose heart also God had disposed and prepared, by such special Means of Grace which he had bestowed upon her.

And this is yet more evident, if we reflect upon God's dealing with her in her last Sickness; whereby God did seem to seal Instruction deeply upon her Soul. Her distemper was one of the worst sort of Small Pox: At her first being taken, she had strong apprehensions that she should dye; she therefore did fall closely upon the work of Examination, desiring the assistance of some Ministers therein; and she was visited by many: she opened her case to us all, and God was pleased to make her to suspect and be jealous of the worst; and to confess, and condemn herself for, her Sins, both of Omission, as well

To the Reader.

as Commission; and humbly to inquire after the only way of Pardon: And it pleased God so to bless these last helps, as that none of us, who visited her, do doubt, but the same Spirit who convinced her of Sin and of Righteousness, did at length seal her up to the day of Redemption.

The Alpha, the first Beginning and Foundation of all practical Religion, is that act whereby a Soul doth deliberately, resolvedly, freely, and expressly dedicate and devote it self unto God, and his Service: Thus the Saints in 2 Cor. 8. 5. The Omega, the last, concluding, and consummating work of a devout Soul, is to commit and commend its Spirit into the hands of God, as to a faithful Creator: thus did Stephen, Acts 17. 59. Yea thus did our Lord Jesus himself: Luk. 23. 46.

Thus also did this blessed Person: she did, I hope, begin well, in an early Consecration of her self to God: I am sure she did end well: and 'tis the end that Crowns the work: she did reckon, that she had not fully Finished her Course; nor rightly laid the Top-stone of her spiritual Building, so as to cry Grace, Grace unto it;

Bb

untill

To the Reader,

untill ſhe had moſt devoutly and humbly offered up her Soul to God in Prayer, by the aſſiſtance of ſome Friend and Miniſter.

Accordingly, although it were midnight, and although my Habitation was far from hers; yet in the very laſt Agonies of her Death, ſhe did ſend for me: and with the cleareſt uſe of her Reason, and the moſt fervent deſires of her Soul, ſhe did entreat me, that I would in her Name, ſolemnly and expreſſly ſurrender and give up her Soul into the Arms and Boſom of her Saviour, in whoſe precious Blood, ſhe did hope that all her ſins were now fully waſhed away.

I did readily obey the Call, and did comply with her deſire: for I did, and do judge that this deſire of hers proceeded from ſome extraordinary Impulſe, and work of the Holy Ghoſt: And Reader, thou wilt think as I do, if thou ſhalt read and obſerve the effect and conſequence hereof, as it is related to thee, in the cloſe of the following diſcourſe.

*Almost ſuch another extraordinary Impreſs (as it may be thought) was made upon her Spirit, on occaſion of this Author's preſenting her with a * Funeral Sermon,*

* Exhortation to Youth to prepare for Judgment, II Eccl. 9.

which

To the Reader.

which he had preached but a little before she was taken sick : which Sermon she having received, and read, and diligently considered ; she was heard to say, That she did think, that her own change would not be far off ; and that she could wish, that the Author might preach her Funeral Sermon also : and she then named the Text (now insisted upon ;) and said, That she hoped, that God would make her Funeral Sermon as profitable to other young Ones, as the Former Sermon had been to her self.

Her Prognosticks were too true, as to the shortness of the time which she lived after those words were spoken by her ; God grant, that her hopes be not frustrated, but that all her dying words may prove truly propheticall : and especially those, which related to the profitable success of the Sermon here before thee.

The Author hath done his part like himself, as well in this, as in the former Discourse : Oh that he might find as diligent, and as considering Readers, as she was : many excellent Considerations, very subservient, and conducing to thy Conviction and Salvation, are proposed herein : but all will be in vain, and to no purpose, without thine

To the Reader.

own Meditation, *and the Spirits application: Concerning the Discourse, I must say no more, and I can do no less; than to allude to the words of the Holy Ghost, Eccl. 12. 9. And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, therefore in this Discourse, he hath Taught the People Knowledge; and hath given good heed, and sought and set in order many Arguments for thy preparing for Death, and moreover for preferring of Death before Life: The Lord convince thee by them; and also carry thee comfortably through all Time to Eternity. - My Paper is short, and my Time shorter, I must therefore conclude; for the Sermon is wholly Printed, and stops only untill I have told thee that I am*

Thy Friend, and Souls Servant,

S. Fairclough.

THE

THE
SAINTS DESIRE
TO
Be with Christ.

PHIL. I. 23.

*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having
a desire to depart, and to be with
Christ, which is far better.*

Saint Paul writing from Rome to the Church
at Philippi, in this Chapter acquaints them
with his Bonds and other Discouragements;
which he tells them by their Prayers
and the Assistance of the Spirit of Christ obtained
thereby, would turn to his Salvation
and the furtherance of the Gospel, and had
already been attended with some considerable
success in that kind; (V. 12, 13, 14.) to for-

tifie and confirm the Professors of the *Christian Faith*, and to propagate and promote it even in the Court of *Caesar*, and in other places. And if Christ might be magnified, he was perfectly indifferent to Live or Dye; (*v. 19, 20.*) *For to me to live is Christ, and to dye is gain, v. 21.* His Life, he hop'd, might advance the Honour of Christ; and his Death would be subservient to the same design: By his further service if he live, and by his sufferings if he dye; by his Ministry supposing his Life, and by his Martyrdom in case of his death.

But if I live in the flesh, this, saith he, is the fruit of my labour, v. 22. or, it is worth my Labour to glorifie the Redeemer by continuing in this World. *Yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

To Depart, or be dissolv'd: The Original word is used both by Christian and Heathen Writers for a departure from any place to return home, *Luke 12. 36.* And when the same Apostle speaks of his approaching death, he tells us, that *the Time of his departure was at hand, 2 Tim. 4. 6.*

Having a desire to depart, a vehement and earnest desire, as the word imports; and to be with Christ, to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 8. with that merciful Saviour, who had compassion on me,
when

when as an ignorant Blasphemer, I persecuted his Members; *who* call'd me to be an Apostle, and enabled me by his Grace to own his Truth in the face of Dangers, and hath hitherto comforted me in all my Tribulation. I desire to depart, that I may be with *him*. With *him*, not with the blessed Angels or departed Saints, though their Society will make a part of the heavenly Joy: Not the *former*, they are but ministring Spirits and menial Servants employed under him; and though they shine as *Stars*, yet *he* is the enlivening *Sun*, from whom they derive their Lustre, and borrow their glory. Not the *latter*; they have no Blessedness but by his Donation and Purchase, no Crowns of Life but what *He* puts on. Therefore 'tis not to be with them only or chiefly, that made them thus groan to be dissolv'd, thus earnestly desire to depart, but to be with Christ: Which is far better, simply and in it self more desirable, by much more better, the Comparative being double in the Greek Text; and yet I wot not what to choose, for I am in a strait betwixt two. On the one hand, his Love to the *Philippians* who needed his presence, (many false Teachers being at that time crept in among them,) made him willing to abide in the Flesh, and deferr his own Felicity for a time upon their account, v. 24. But the Glory of Christ's presence on the other, and his own unspeakable advantage by it, made him desirous of a Departure; and

therefore though he determines for the former, and was content to live, and 'tis probable had some secret intimation from Heaven, that all his Work in this World was not yet finish't; yet he grants the latter to be simply more eligible: *having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far Better.* Which words are not more suitable to a *Funeral Solemnity*, than expressive of the *dying Thoughts and Temper of our deceased Friend*, and were chosen by her as the Subject of my present Discourse. That I may comprehend the Substance of the Text, according to the desire of the Dead, for the Benefit and Instruction of the Living; let us consider,

1. When, and how far, it is *Warrantable* for a Christian to *desire* Death?

2. In what respects to depart and to be with Christ is far *better* than to abide in the Flesh.

3. On what *Grounds* and *Principles* a Christian may expect a future Blessedness with Christ, after his departure, so as to encourage and excite his desires after it?

4. Whence it comes to pass, that even those who acknowledge it far Better to be with Christ, than to continue in the Body, are yet *Unwilling* to depart in order to it? and what *Remedies* are proper to the case of such?

5. The *Application* of the whole, particularly with respect to the sad Occasion of our present Meeting.

1. When

1. When and how far is it *Warrantable* for a Christian to desire to be dissolv'd? This Inquiry may be answered in the following Propositions.

1. Our *Dissolution* and Departure as a *natural* or *penal evil*, as contrary to Nature, or as the Punishment of Sin, cannot possibly be the Object of a rational Desire: If God hath promised a long Life as the Encouragement and Reward of our Obedience, and threatned an *hasty death* as the punishment of Impiety; If it be universally true, that the Soul of Man desires Union with the Body, and unavoidably dreads a separation from it; If torturing pains, and loathsome Diseases are the usual Antecedents of dying: If the Corruption of the Body, and it's Imprisonment in the Grave till the general Resurrection be the certain Consequent of our dissolution; We cannot but think of Death as a *natural Evil*, and as *such* decline and fear it.

Much less desirable will it appear, if considered as the *Wages of Sin*, and the fruit of Gods Displeasure, and the Just Sentence of his Vindictive Justice: but how far our dissolution in this latter Notion of it is changed by the death of Christ in reference to Believers, is another question, and will more properly be considered under the third Inquiry.

2. Our dissolution and departure ought *not* to be desired, *Only as a freedom from Temporal Evil*; as preventive of present suffering,

ing, or delivering us from it. The Apostle doth not mention the uneasie Circumstances of a Prison, or the continual hardships to which he was exposed from the malice of his Adversaries, as the ground of his desire to depart, but *to be with Christ*. He knew very well that a Christian may serve the end of Gods glory, and be useful to others in a state of suffering: and therefore when he saith in another place, *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burden'd*, he adds the limitation in the following words, *not to be uncloth'd but cloth'd upon, that Mortality may be swallowed up of Life*: not merely to avoid the inconveniences of our abode in so poor a dwelling, but to come to the possession of the *Building not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 3, 4. Not merely to find relief and deliverance from our present burdens, when through melancholly or discontent we are weary of Life: *Job 7. 13. Jon. 4. 3.* when we have set our Hearts on somewhat we cannot obtain, or struggle with some Difficulties we cannot master: or are impatient under bodily Pains, or quite dispirited by the sad prospect of approaching Calamities; in such a case to *wish for Death, and desire to depart*, is unbecoming the Character, the Encouragement and Hopes of a Souldier of Christ. Much less will the Gallantry of a Roman, or a Philosopher legitimate the desire of Death, only to prevent Slavery, or avoid Disgrace, or miss the

the

the sight of an unwelcome object. As *Cato* resolv'd to dye, that he might not behold *Victorious Caesar*, whom by all means possible he had endeavoured to ruine. And * *Cicero* saith expressly of him, that the reason of his Choice was just, and that *Cato* ought to dye rather than see the face of a Tyrant. But we have not so learn'd Christ, for

3. We must not designedly precipitate or hasten our *Departure*; nor wilfully neglect any probable means to preserve our Lives, how desirous soever we are to be with Christ. We acknowledge God as the *Author* and *Owner* of our Lives, and shall we presume to dispose of what is *his*, without a declaration of his consent and order to authorize us? Are we bound by the sixth commandment to preserve the life of our *Neighbour*, and may we be negligent and careless of *our own*? Is not every man nearer to himself than any other can be? And is not self-murder a violation of the Law of Nature, and condemned by a general suffrage? And can we suppose it a sufficient Justification of our selves, that we profess a desire to be with Christ? whereas we may not do this or any other evil, though the greatest good may come of it: *He that hasteth to be rich*, even in this sence, *shall not be innocent*, Prov. 28. 16. We must be intirely devoted to serve and glorifie the Re-

* *Cicero* in *Tuscul. quest. lib. I.*

deemer as long as we live ; and rather dye upon the Spot, than quit our Station without the order of our General : and yet we must not shipwreck our Health, or expose our Lives to hazard, without a Warrant from Heaven.

4. A *Sincere* Desire to be with Christ, is consistent with *some Fear* of Death, and a reproveable *Unwillingness* to depart and be *dis-solv'd*. The Example of Christ himself is usually urg'd in vindication of a natural sensitive fear of Death, *viz.* the discovery thereof which he made in his Agony and Prayer in the Garden. A *Socinian* only will assert, that therefore he was more affected with the fear of Death than many of the Martyrs have been, because of the exquisite Temper and tender constitution of his Body ; and that there was nothing but what was natural and ordinary in his case. Whereas he was to conflict with the Wrath of God, and bear the Curse, and be wounded for our Transgressions, &c. otherwise his own Innocency and perfect Resignation to the will of his Father, and the prospect and assurance of Victory and Reward, would certainly have prevented his Terrible Agony, and bloody Sweat, and importunate Cries, *that if possible the Cup might pass from him.* However I doubt not, but a Timorous Temper may render some Persons extreamly apprehensive of the pains of Death, and on that account unwilling to depart,

er dye without must be our from
 depurt, though they are truly *desirous* to be with Christ.

Others through the weakness of Faith or overmuch concern in the Affairs of this Life, &c. though they grant it unspeakably better to be present with the Lord, and have chosen it as their Portion and final Happiness, may yet be loth to pass through the dark Valley. They cannot joyn with the Apostle in desiring to be *dissolv'd*, though they can speak it from their very hearts, that they desire to be *with Christ*: And that desire is so far prevailing as to keep them upright, and yet not efficacious, so as to conquer the fears of interposing Death. How unwelcome was the message of Death to an *upright Hezekiah*, even then when he could plead his Integrity before the Lord! *he turn'd his face to the wall, and wept*, and besought the Lord that he might not dye, as is evident by *Isa. 38. 3. 5, v. compar'd*. But I dare not say, his unwillingness to dye at that Time, was a sinfull weakness, because he might well be concern'd for the Kingdom after his decease, least the faithful should be staggered, and the People revolt to Idolatry, there being no visible *Successor* to advance the Reformation so hopefully begun; for *Manasses* was not then born, being but *twelve* years old when he began to reign, and we know that *Hezekiah* had *fifteen* years added to his Life, *2 Kings 20. 6.*

5. Though

5. Though we desire to be with Christ, we must not be *Peremptory* as to any *determinate Time*; but referr our selves to Gods good pleasure for the season of our departure. Though with *Job* we should be ready to answer, when God doth call, yet with humility and Resignation we must expect his summons, and wait till our change come: *Job* 14. 15. though the *dayes of our appointed Time* should be longer than ordinary. Although in a dutiful observance to our Heavenly Father we should be willing to return home as soon as he shall please to call us, and the felicity of his Presence should render it desireable; yet his Sovereign will, and unerring wisdom must be practically acknowledg'd in reference to the *Season*. He alone, of whom and to whom are all things, is fit to determine how long we shall tarry, or how soon we shall depart: even the Light of Nature may teach us this. And therefore, when ever we pray *Thy Kingdom come*, we must not limit the Holy One of *Israel* by prescribing the *Time*; but immediately subjoyn, with respect to that, *Thy will be done*.

6. Not the Time only, but the *Kind and Manner*, of our Dissolution must be referr'd to God. Some have wisht for a *Sudden Death*, and others have pray'd against it. Some have desired to dye by one disease, and others by another.

Some

Some holy persons of a timorous Temper and a tender Body, would choose to depart by a *Consumption*; not only as allowing them a longer Time to prepare for Death, but as an *easier* kind of Death than several others: Whereas, besides the uncertainty and deceitfulness of that disease, 'tis more than possible, that the Languishment of that pining sickness may be as irksome and insupportable, as the shorter pains of more violent distempers. But God is the Judge (to whom we must submit, as the wise disposer of all events) not only of the *Time*, but the *Manner* of our departure: not only how long we shall sojourn in this earthly Tabernacle, but *what* shall dissolve and pull it down.

7. *Our Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, must not be Rash and hasty*, but the result of many Serious and deliberate thoughts, comparing both states together, and understanding the difference. The Apostle knew his duty in compliance with the Will of God, and therefore for the service of his Master, and the advantage of the *Philippians*, was willing to Live: but he knew withal, it was far better in it self to depart that he might be with Christ, and *as such* he desired it. And a due *Comparison* between our present and our future life, our inconveniencies and sufferings in this world, and our Felicity in the next, is proper to regulate and quicken

en our desires to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Therefore,

2. *In what respects is it far Better to be with Christ, than to abide in the flesh?* what is the difference between *What we are*, and *What we shall be*? that the expectation of the *Latter* should even make *Death* and dissolution desirable in order to it. And here it will be necessary to consider,

1. The Expression of our *Felicity* after death here used by the Apostle, *Being with Christ*.

2. *In what respects 'tis far better to Depart*, and be absent from the Body, that we may be present with him.

1. The Expression of our *future blessedness*, by *being with Christ*. Till we are present with the Lord, and see him face to face, and know as we are known, we must content our selves with such Representations of it, as God is pleas'd to reveal in his Word: Such as our ignorant earthly minds can bear, and may be most affected with. But when once the vail of darkness is remov'd by death, we shall see him as he is, and all our Faculties be purified and enlarg'd, and suited to the blessed company and work above. We shall see him whom our Souls love, and reap a Happiness by doing so, bigger than our present Hopes, and far above our highest thoughts about it: For in his presence is fulness of Joy, and at his right hand are Everlasting pleasures.

And

And can we imagine, that a Blessedness, purchas'd by infinite Merit, contriv'd by infinite Wisdom, and prepared by infinite Power, and bestow'd at length through infinite Grace, will in any thing be defective? Doth not our Apostle describe it *best*, by assuring us it cannot be describ'd; that 'tis greater than we ever saw, beyond what we ever heard, and far above what we can ever think? Doth not the very hopes of seeing him, revive our drooping hearts? Oh what will be the Glory of that blessed sight! is not the pledge and Assurance of it by the Harbinger of his holy Spirit exceeding comfortable? Oh what transcendent Satisfaction will his presence give us! We now comfort ourselves with the Contemplation, and one another with the Discourse of it: and if our dark Faith and our faint Hopes, can give us such a Joyful prospect of what shall be consequent to our dissolution; into what ravishing Joy shall we enter, by the open Vision and full enjoyment? Is the encouragement and support of a Christian now, from *his presence with us* here; and will it not be far better, to *be present with him* above, *to be for ever with the Lord*? When we shall never question his Love to us, or doubt of ours to him, but have a full assurance of the one, and a glorious exercise of the other?

And because our knowledge will be still encreasing, our flames of Love shall still rise

Cc

high-

higher. But what additional bliss the Soul shall have by the Resurrection of the body, and the great Transactions of the Judgment Day, we know but in part. Blessed be God we know *so much* in this imperfect state, *enough* to excite our desires, and quicken our preparations, and encourage our Perseverance. And let's bless him more, that he hath prepared *such a glory* for us in the presence of the Redeemer, as we cannot fully understand, till death convey us to him.

But *to be with Christ*, is not only eligible in it self, as expressive of our future Glory; but much rather to be desired, if considered *comparatively*: Therefore,

2. *In what respects* is it preferable to an abode in the flesh, so as to make us *rather* choose to *depart*, that we may be with him; than continue in the Body, and be absent from the Lord?

1. Is not a state of *Rest* and *Joy* much more desirable, than to be continually harass'd with *Trouble* and *Sorrow*? We ordinarily begin this World in Tears, and solemnize our own Nativity as we do the Funerals of our dearest Friends: as if we were *then* sensible of that universal Curse which hath afflicted Mankind since the first Transgression; and had a clear prospect of the miseries we are born to, and must afterward suffer: And in all the Portions of our little time, what and how many do we every where encounter!

How

How many things are there which we find are wanting, both as to our Accomplishments and Enjoyments? and how much are we disappointed, if we look for satisfaction from *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life? which, saith the Apostle, is all that is in the world: : Joh. 2. 16. Earthly Pleasures, Wealth, and Honour.*

Do we not find, that what doth rejoyce and please us one day, appears with another Face when we view it next? or if we think it would please us still, 'tis gone e're we are aware, and with all our skill and power we cannot protract it's duration. Do not evil accidents overtake us on a sudden? and our most probable designs miscarry in the birth? as if all things were governed by Chance, and there were no Intelligent Director to oversee and regulate the Affairs of the World, and the Actions and Conditions of men: *Insomuch, that the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong, nor Bread to the wise, nor Riches to men of understanding, nor Favour to men of skill, but time and chance happens to them all, Eccl. 11. 9.* Our Pleasures flatter and deceive us, and our Afflictions trouble and disquiet us: We are imposed upon by our Senses, and misguided by our Passions; cross'd in our Desires, and frustrated in our Hopes; griev'd by present evils, or perplext with the fears of future; and our Spirits for the most part discompos'd either by personal or

relative Calamities. Some rueful Spectacle is ever now and then presented before our Eyes ; some evil tidings or unpleasant sound doth grate our Ears. We bewail the wants of the poor, which we cannot supply ; or envy the prosperity of the Wicked, which we cannot hinder ; or grieve at the Afflictions of the Righteous, which we cannot remedy.

We have some suffering Friend with whom to sympathize, some distressed or deceased Relation to lament ; some unhappiness of our own, or of those we love, to be concerned for. Besides the Treachery and unfaithfulness of our seeming Friends ; the Hatred and Malice of our open Enemies ; the scandalous Actions of professing Christians ; their Divisions and Animosities among themselves, and their despitelful usage and entertainment from the World ; the Complaints of the miserable, the Groans of the Sick, the Cries of the Oppressed, and our own bodily infirmities, weaknesses and pains, &c. enough one would think to make us desire to depart, and render us extremely willing to lay down and dye, (if God think fit,) that we may be at rest ; especially having the expectation of *being for ever with the Lord*. For otherwise even * Heathens have spoken excellently of the Advantages of Death, as the period of our present Sorrows.

* *M. Anton. lib. Arr. Epict. lib. 4. c. 10. Boeth. Consol. Philos.*

2. Is not a state of *Holiness and Perfect purity*, far better than a Life of *Temptation, Corruption and Sin*? How are we now buffeted by *Satan*? by his Sinful suggestions, his subtle devices and snares, and his fiery darts? and by that means our Integrity assaulted, our peace of Conscience unsettled, and our Perseverance indangered?

Our Conflict with him is so difficult, and the issue of the Battel, as to what depends on us, so very uncertain; that we are often ready to throw down our Arms, and give up all as Lost. For though he be a conquer'd and baffled Adversary, through the Victory which our Captain hath obtain'd against him; yet we cannot now Triumph over him, as hereafter we shall. And is it not far better to abandon *this world, of which he is the God*, 1 Cor. 4. 4. and get above that *Air of which he is the Prince*, Eph. 2. 2. that we may be with Christ?

Moreover, how doth our depraved Nature continually cast forth mire and dirt? what remaining Filthiness is there yet to be purg'd? what powerful Lusts to be mortified and subdued? which indispose us for Spiritual duties, and derive a damp and deadness upon all our Religious Exercises; which cool our Zeal, and abate the fervour of our Spirits in the service of our Redeemer; which weaken our Confidence in Prayer, and shame our faces before the Lord in

secret. And is it not far better to part with *the body of Flesh*, that thereby we may be rid of *this body of sin and death*, Rom. 7. 24. and be like our Saviour in perfect purity?

Do we not complain of our Ignorance of Divine Truths, and the blessed Mysteries of the Gospel, notwithstanding all our means of knowledge? of our earthliness and unbelief? of unbecoming Thoughts of God and holy things? of proud Imaginations and carnal reasonings against his Works and Word? of languishing and imperfect Graces to be recovered and perfected, &c? And is it not *better* to be with Christ, where that which is imperfect shall be done away?

Is not God dishonour'd and provok't, by our frequent Omissions and slight Performances of Duty? do we not resist and quench and sadden his Holy Spirit? and are we not often griev'd by God's rebukes and frowns, by the wounds and smart regrets of our own Conscience? so that we *remember God, and are troubled*, and cry out in the bitterness of our Souls, *Hath he forgotten to be gracious, and will he be merciful no more?* Are not our holy Purposes inconstant, and our best Resolutions wavering and unsteddy, and very quickly, very easily shatter'd by the breath of a small Temptation?

Have we not a constant Watch to keep over our Hearts and wayes? a perpetual War to manage with the infernal Trinity,
the

the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? and do we know his rage, and malice, and serpentine policy, with the Multitude, Strength and Power of his Temptations? How often we have been foil'd already, and how soon we we may be so again? and shall we not be desirous of a sinless state in the presence of Christ; where no Tempter, no Temptation shall ever be admitted?

Yea, had we no corruption, or Sin, of our own to be delivered from, yet our concern at God's dishonour by the sins of others, should make us willing to depart; as much more desirable than our abode on earth: Job. 24. 9. *Which is given into the hands of the wicked, and defiled by it's Inhabitants,* Isa. 24. 4: Where the very Air is infected with Oaths and Blasphemies, prophane discourse, and filthy talk: Where the very Being of a God is question'd, his Providence deny'd, and his Authority mockt: Where the Gospel of Christ is disparag'd and despised, his Laws contradicted, his Worship polluted, his Institutions subverted, and his holy Name made a cloak for Licentiousness, and his faithful Servants trampled on by the foot of Pride, and scorned by men at ease, and forc't to own his Truth with the peril of their Lives. And can we say, *It is good to be here?* or is it not far better to forsake such a Place and Company, that we may be with Christ.

3. Let us consider what are the grounds and Principles by which a Christian is assured of this Blessedness in the presence of Christ after his dissolution. This Inquiry is necessary, because the discourse of our future bliis with Christ cannot be supposed to have any effect or influence upon us, to make us desire our departure, while we disbelieve or make a doubt of the matter.

I hope it were needless to prove the Possibility of the Souls existence in a state of separation from the Body.

Whether in the Body or out of the Body, 2 Cor. 12. 2. would not have been a doubt to this great Apostle, if he could not possibly have liv'd but *in it*: neither could he desire to depart that he might *be with Christ*, if after his departure he should *not be at all*. And supposing the existence of the Soul notwithstanding the dissolution of the Body, we have as full an assurance as the nature of the thing is capable of, that holy Souls shall be present with the Lord in glory, when absent from the body: 1 Thes. 4. 17. Job. 17. 24. Mat. 24. 25. Rev. 3. 22, &c.

But because the Text hath a special relation to *Christ* and to be with him, is that Blessedness, on the account whereof 'tis desirable to depart; I shall only mention *his Death and Resurrection*, as a sufficient ground to confirm our Faith in the certainty of being
with

with him, and to excite our Desires of a departure in order to it.

1. *The Death of Christ.* He hath cancell'd the Hand-writing against us, and put away Sin, which is the sting of Death, by the Death of the Cross: *Eph. 1. 7. A way is now open for us into the holy of holies by his blood, Heb. 10. 19.* not for our Prayers, only but our Persons. He hath wounded the Head of the old Serpent, even by permitting him to bruise his Heel, by crucifying his humane Nature, (which was only *Vestigium Deitatis.*) As *Benaiah* slew the *Egyptian* with his own Spear, *2 Sam. 23. 21.* Having destroyed death and him that had the power of it, and delivered those who were all their Life-time subject to bondage, through the fear of death, *Heb. 2. 15.*

He hath set his foot on the neck of this Adversary, disarm'd it of it's weapon, and rob'd it of it's sting, and abolish'd the ugliness and poyson of it. He hath dismounted *Hell and Damnation* from behind him that sat on the *Pale-horse*, *Rev. 6. 8.* Whether the first *Adam* were buried in *Calvary*, where the second was crucified, as some affirm, I need not enquire; we know that his Death was our Victory, and his Cross may be our Triumph; since the Devil is conquered, and death Sanctified, and the Grave perfum'd by his burial, so that we need not be afraid to lodge in a Sepulchre where our Lord himself hath slept.

Yea,

Yea since the effusion of his Blood, there is an amiable ruddiness in the Face of Death; for that which was the Instrument of Justice, is now the messenger of Peace and Joy, that which was the gate of Hell, is the way to Life. He hath brought *sweetness out of the Strong*, and *meat out of the Eater*; 1 Cor. 3. 21. and therefore Death as well as Life is reckon'd in the Inventory of the riches of the Saints. *All things are yours, because you are Christs, and Christ is Gods.*

2. *His Resurrection and Exaltation*; his rising from the Dead not only discovers the possibility of our Resurrection, and gives us a *pledge and assurance* of it, as declaring the sufficiency and acceptation of his Sacrifice; that therefore the Dead in Christ shall live, and with his Dead Body arise: Rom. 8. 11. *Isa.* 26. 19. But being punctually effected according to his prediction and promise, it confirms the Truth of all his Word, and seals the promise of eternal Life unto all Believers. He hath open'd the Prison doors, and loos'd the bands of Death, and roll'd away the heavy Stones from the Graves of his people; he is now become the *first fruits of them that sleep in Jesus*: And hath the *Keys of Death and Hell*; Rev. 1. 18. even the two most formidable enemies are under *his Dominion*: *who though once he were dead, doth now live for evermore.* And for this very end did God raise him up, that *our faith and hope might*
be

be in him, in reference to the Blessedness of another Life, 1 Pet. 1. 21.

Yea, saith the Apostle, concerning that, he raised him from the dead, no more to see corruption, Act. 13. 34. God said, *I will give you the sure mercies of David*; or an Everlasting Covenant, which Death shall not dissolve, Isa. 55. 3. And his being risen, is the Ground of our Faith and Hope that the Promise shall be fulfill'd. For the Resurrection of Christ is the evidence of the validity and efficacy of his Death and Sacrifice, and a sufficient proof, that his precious Blood shed upon the Cross, was the blood of an Everlasting Covenant, Heb. 13. 20. Establishing a Covenant of Grace, and making it truly Everlasting; for we know that he is a Priest for ever, after the power of an endless Life, Heb. 7. 16. And therefore know, to our unspeakable Satisfaction, Incouragement, and Joy, in whom we have believed, and that he is able to keep unto that day, what we have committed to him; 2 Tim. 1. 12. to perfect what he hath begun; Phil. 1. 6. and at last present us blameless before the presence of his glory with exceeding Joy, Jude 24. v. For our Life being hid with him in God, we are fully assured, that when he who is our Life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory; Col. 3. 3, 4. and because he lives, we shall live also; and when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 Joh. 3. 2.

4. Let us consider, Whence it comes to pass, that

that notwithstanding the Blessedness of being with Christ, and our assurance of it by his Death and Resurrection, that yet we are so backward and unwilling to depart? What is the true reason why so many of those who acknowledge it far better to be with Christ, yet cannot say with the Apostle, That they desire to be dissolv'd, that they may be with him?

1. The weakness of Faith concerning the Invisible World, and the future Glory of the Saints, is the reason why so many Christians are unwilling to dye. They are very sensible of the inconveniencies of their present abode; they complain to God and men of Corruption, Temptation, and Sin, and they hear of a blessed Deliverance from all these by Death, and a perfect Felicity in the presence of the Redeemer after their dissolution; but *unbelief makes them stagger at the Promise*: They are not fully satisfied that such a transcendent Glory will be consequent to Dying. Did they but soundly believe the Testimony and Revelation which God hath given in his Word concerning it, they would choose to be *absent from the body*. Some of the Ignorant Heathens have been desperate in their Choice of death, only as the Period of present Calamities: but others who were doubtful of the Consequence, have yet entertained it with an hearty Welcome: As *Socrates* for instance, who profess'd, That he ought not to fear death because he could not tell whether it were

were good or evil: And shall not we who understand the Grounds and Principles, the greatness, and certainty of a future Blessedness after Death, be as willing to depart? *A confirmed Faith* is therefore necessary and adviseable in the present case: and the rather, that thereby we may *quench the fiery darts of Satan*; who if he cannot hinder us of our Crown, would rob us of our Joyful Prospect of it; if he cannot prevent our future Glory, would render us dejected in our passage thither; if he cannot prevail to exclude and banish us for ever from the Presence of Christ, would darken our present comfort by the desire and Hope of it; but more especially at the prospect and approach of Death, for that is his hour, and the power of darkness.

But by *this shield of Faith*, we may be able to stand even in that evil day of our dissolution, Eph. 6. 11. 16.

2. *The Pains of Death.* They pray that God would hasten his Glorious Kingdom, and bring them to it; and believe it to be most eligible to be with Christ; yet are loth their own Prayers should be answered, and the end and object of their Faith obtain'd, through the discouraging apprehensions they admit of a dying hour.

Would we not be with the the Lord, and know him better, and Love him more, and enjoy him fully? and shall we stick at a little pain, as introductory to so great a Happiness?

ness? A Pain that will speedily convey us to Eternal ease and rest; which thousands of Holy Souls in Glory have indur'd more of, than we can fear.

But suppose the Agonies of Death are ne're so frightful to Flesh and Blood, *hath not our Redeemer a Rod and Staff to comfort us in the dark Valley?* Ps. 23. 4. Doth he not know what it is to dye, and how much we dread it? doth he not understand our weakness, remember our frailty, pity our infirmities, and bid us ask for support and Strength? yea, hath he not promis'd, that *when Heart and Flesh shall fail, that he will be the Strength of our Hearts, and our Portion for ever,* Psal. 73. 26. Shall ignorant hopeless *Heathens*, without God in this world, without the expectation of being with Christ in the next, be so desirous of Immortality, as to dispatch themselves, and be their own Executioners, to force an escape from the Body? And shall we resist and struggle, draw back and fear, object, and be unwilling, when our Saviour calls us to endless and unspeakable Felicity? Is not this the last Experiment of our Faith, and Patience, and holy Resolution? the last essay of our Christian Courage? Are not the antecedent pains of dying the fruit of sin, no less than the throws and pangs of Travelling Women? and are the latter tolerable in hopes of Children, and their own deliverance; and may we not support the Former by the assistance

ance of a greater and better Hope? Are they at all considerable and worthy our fear, if put in the ballance with the promised Salvation to follow on our departure? Are they comparable in the Nature of *Evil*, to the blessed Life they lead us to in the Nature of *Good*? or comparable to the gripes of Conscience, which unpardon'd Sinners meet with in Life and Death? yea, do we not think them greater, and make them worse by our foolish fears, than most do find them? Is not the Sting of Death remov'd, and the Heavenly Mansions prepar'd and promis'd? And is it a reasonable Request, that God should vary from his settled Course, and fixed Law, upon our sole Account? Will nothing else content and please us, but that Heaven must descend to Earth, or we be in a moment translated thither, to prevent our Pain, and supersede the necessity of our Dissolution, which we fear will be so attended?

As a proper Remedy in the present Case, let us familiarize the Thoughts of *Death*, by frequent, serious Meditation: Let us view it oftner in our way, that it may not meet us with so much Terror at our Journeys end: Let us admit the Thoughts of a Departure with particular Application to our selves, and improve the Funerals of our Friends, as a seasonable *memento* that our own is near: Let us lay open the Picture of Death naked to our view, and urge it to our Hearts with the
infi-

infinite Glory that immediately succeeds, and take in the Death and Promise of Christ, as our assurance of it. And this will reconcile us more to a Departure, and help to overcome our unreasonable fears of Pain and Sickness antecedent to it.

3. *The weakness and declension of our Love to Christ*, is another ground of our Unwillingness to depart, and to be with him. To a degenerate Soul, that is destitute of the Love of Christ, an *Everlasting Distance* would be more desirable than a *Local Presence*: For that could not make him happy, he would still be as far remov'd from Bliss, by being with the Lord, as the Centre of a Millstone in the bottom of the Sea would be from moisture. But the Company and Converse of those we Love, must needs be Eligible; and the more we love them, the stronger will still be our desire of being with them; and the more impatient shall we be of every delay. And is it not the sense and secret language of our Hearts, *Whom have we in Heaven but Christ?* And are we not desirous to forsake this Earth, to enjoy his Presence? Certainly, the growth, and strength, and exercise of Holy Love to Christ, would even render our Dissolution grateful in order to it; and make our Hearts rejoyce at the approach of Death, as it did old Jacob's, to see the Waggon that are sent to fetch us to our beloved Jesus, who is Lord of that Countrey whither we are going.

4. Immo-

4. *Immoderate Love to this present World, and our Temporal Life.* Were we crucified to *fleshy Pleasures, and sensual Joys, to worldly Honours and earthly Riches*; we should less regret the Thoughts of Dying, and more heartily desire *to be with Christ*. For as the Pangs of Death are not ordinarily so violent and intolerable to one whose strength is wasted by a pining Sickness, as to him who is Arrested suddenly in his full strength and vigour; so will he more easily leave this World, who for some time past hath been dying to it. Were we more crucified to the World, and the World to us by the Cross of Christ, Gal. 6. 14. we should not so affectionately hug the Carcass of a dead Enemy, whom we our selves have crucified and slain; but wait for the Time, and long for the happy Hour when we shall leave it, and be gone to our Eternal Rest. Let us therefore make use of all the Christian methods of Mortification, and look on this World as a strange place, and our selves as *Pilgrims and Strangers* here; as Exiles from our own Countrey, and hastening to it: And we cannot but wish our selves at home, and desire a departure as necessary thereto; and in the *interim*, sigh to think of the vast disproportion and difference between the slender Entertainments of our Inn, and the plentiful Provisions of our Father's House.

5. *Blotted Evidences, and the want of Assurance,* concerning our Title to the Heavenly
D d Glory.

Glory. And this we all pretend, as the reason of our Unwillingness to Die: A *Sadducee* is loth to die, lest he should not be at all; an *Unprepared Sinner*, for fear of being Miserable; and a *Doubting Christian*, because he knows not whether Happiness or Misery shall be his Portion after his Departure: For were we well assured we should be with Christ for ever, we could not be so backward and unwilling to be dissolv'd. Had we any better grounds to hope that Sin was pardon'd, and God our Covenant-Father; that Heaven would be our Inheritance, and we should not come into Condemnation; we might rejoyce to think of our departure, when and how it shall please God to call us. When the *Psalmist* could say, *The Lord is my Shepherd*; he could boldly venture upon Death, and walk through the Valley of Darkness *without fear of evil*, Psal. 23. 4, 6. But when Distress had brought his Sin to remembrance, and made him doubt of his Condition, he cries, *O spare me a little longer, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen*, Psal. 39. 13. Could you say with the Spouse of Christ in the *Canticles*, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*, Cant. 6. 3. you might chearfully joyn your *Amen*, when you hear the Spirit and the Bride say in the *Revelations*, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, Rev. 20. 22.

Therefore Try your State, and Examine yourselves a-fresh; and endeavour with your utmost
Care

Care and Diligence to obtain a well grounded Assurance, founded on the Testimony of a good Conscience, by comparing the Promises of Remission, and Eternal Life, with the requisite Qualifications and Conditions of them: For if our hearts condemn us not, we shall have confidence towards God, 1 Joh. 3. 21. even in a dying hour. To which end, let us endeavour, by daily Acts of Repentance, to obtain a daily Pardon. Let us sum up our Accounts at the foot of every Page; I mean, reflect every Night, on the Passages of the preceding Day; that we may rest on our Beds with the sense of a daily Pardon, and be as fit to die as we are to sleep.

6. Our fond Affections to our Friends on Earth, may make us loth to die, though we hope to be with Christ in Heaven. But is not his Bosom more desirable, than the Arms and Embraces of our dearest Friends, and nearest Relations? Must we not abandon and hate them all for his sake? Luke 14. 26. i. e. use them as contemptible and hated things, if they keep us from him. Have we not solemnly engag'd to do so by our Covenant with God? and shall we not stand to our Agreement? Is there no difference between our Friends on Earth, and our beloved Saviour? How often is an unactive Pity vouchsafed in the room of Succour, when they need our Assistance, or we intercede for theirs! We know, if they are *unholy*, they shall for ever be banish'd from the Presence of

Christ ; and we may well be ashamed to be unwilling to die on their account: And if they are *holy*, tho' we shall not return to them, yet we know that they shall shortly come to us. And cannot God instruct them in his Fear, order their Conditions, dispose of their Affairs, provide for their Comfort, and answer all our Prayers in reference to them, after our departure? yea, hath he not often done so?

Have we any Friends on Earth, that are every way so accomplish'd, as always to delight and please us? Or are we so perfectly wise and good, as never to disgust and disoblige them? Is there not some Selfishness, Design, and private Interest; some Hypocrisie, Flattery, and Dissimulation; some Inequality, Unsuitableness, or Inconstancy in our Friendships here? Are not the Best of those we love, Ignorant and Mistaken, Erroneous, Deceived, Weak and Impotent; and as likely to defile and grieve us by their Corruption, as to edifie and rejoyce us by their Grace? But hereafter, when that which is imperfect is done away, they shall all have suitable Qualifications to recommend them to our most sincere and constant Affection, and be every way more fit for our Content and Joy. We shall then be never weary of each others Company; we shall fully understand one anothers Mind; we shall live in perfect Harmony, and full Satisfaction, without the dread of Absence, or fear of Separation

tion. Now if we have some Friends, we have many Enemies; but in the presence of Christ there shall be *none* but *Friends*, and such as shall for ever be *so*; their Persons being more amiable, and their Society more desirable than now it can be. Now if we are pleased with their Converse, we may quickly lose it, and the *desire of our eyes be taken from us*, by a sudden stroke, Ezek. 24. 16. that we know not how to value or love them, till 'tis too late. And shall we be unwilling, *on their account*, to depart, and *be with Christ*, since they are hastning after us, and after a few days absence, we shall meet them again, and dwell with them for ever?

5. The *Application* remains, which shall be only in Four Particulars; as *Inferences* from what hath been said.

1. We may hence take notice of the *great Efficacy and Power of the Christian Faith and Hope*. That notwithstanding our fondness and affection to the Body, and the contrariety of Death to our sensitive Inclinations; that yet this Faith and Hope can urge us to desire a Dissolution in order to it.

2. We may hence infer, That *the Soul doth not sleep in the Grave with its Companion the Body, until the Resurrection*, but immediately pass into a state of Bliss. For the Apostle to abide in the Flesh, was more expedient

dient for the *Philippians*: For him to live, would be *Christ*, Ver. 21. &c. For the advancement of his Glory: How then was it better to depart? or in what strait could he be, whether he should choose a longer Life, or a present departure, if no Blessedness were expected till the Final Judgment? And why doth he mention his being with *Christ*, as that which made Death desirable? Is not the Presence of *Christ* with us on Earth, and our serving the Ends of his Glory in this World, much more eligible than to sleep in the Grave till dooms day?

3. Is it better to depart, and be with *Christ*, than abide in the Body? Then the Fable of *Purgatory* is hereby Exploded. Were we to be transported by our Dissolution, only from lesser Pains to greater, or from a Life of Sorrow, to a State of Suffering, (such as the *Romanists* imagine their *Purgatory* to be, equivalent to the Torments of Hell in the Extremity of them, though different in Duration,) how were it far better to depart, that we may be with *Christ*?

4. Is it the Object of a Christians desire, to depart, and be with *Christ*? And is that far better than to continue in the Body? Then let us not Grieve immoderately at the departure of those who have obtain'd their wish, and enjoy their desire.

Did they long to be with *Christ*, and choose to be dissolv'd in order to it? And is it their unspeakable Satisfaction that they are so?

And

And do we express our Love and Kindness to them, by repining at their Felicity? Shall their desired Repose, and Rest, and Happiness, be our Torment, Grief, and Sorrow? Would we, that contrary to their own well-grounded Inclinations, they should continue longer here on Earth, or return back again from Heaven, meerly to gratifie our fond Affections? Have they obtain'd a speedy Victory after a short Conflict? and receiv'd the Crown of Life, as soon almost as they begun their Christian Race; the glorious Recompence of Reward, though they had wrought but one hour in the Vineyard, when others must labour twelve? And shall we mourn like utter Strangers to the Christian Faith and Hope? Would we delay the Glory of God in their Salvation, and defer their Felicity in the blessed Presence of the Redeemer; and be content that a Voice should be wanting in the Heavenly Quire, rather than we be Sorrowed by their departure?

Would Parents have their Children continue in their Swadling-Cloaths? Or when advanc'd to riper Years, wish them back again to Infancy, and hinder their Possession of that Inheritance which they are born to, and dispos'd to enter on, and enjoy?

Are not you your selves hastning to the Grave, and hope e're long to be with Christ? And is it not a refreshing Thought, to consider, that your *Treasure* is there before you;

with their Father and your Father, with their God and Saviour and yours ; I mean, your Holy Children and Friends whom you dearly Love ?

The Primitive Church was wont to Solemnize the Funerals of Holy Persons, with singing Psalms and Hymns of Praise to God, for their Deliverance and Felicity obtain'd by Dying : And shall we refuse to be comforted, for the Death of those who sleep in Jesus, and desired to do so ; *as if in this Life only we had Hope in Christ ?*

Something, 'tis true, of Grief and Sorrow, must be allow'd to Nature, Duty, Custom, and Contracted Friendship, and the Honour of the Deceas'd ; for they are reckon'd to die miserable, who are hurl'd into the Grave without the attendance of a Sigh, or Tear, or Funeral Lamentation.. But our Assurance of the future Glory they possess with Christ, (which they themselves prefer'd to a longer abode on Earth,) should wipe our Eyes, and prevent Excess. We mourn that they are gone, and *desire their Company* ; but we know, they do not wish themselves back again for the sake of *ours* ; no, they are gone to better Friends *above*, than those they have left *below*. And were it not for the weakness of our Faith and Hope, in reference to the Invisible World ; were it not for the remaining Power of unmortified Selfishness, and our immoderate Love of this present Life ; were it

it not for the remifness of our Love to Christ, and the blessed Saints ; we could not but desire to be with *them*, rather than wish that they should be longer with *us*.

Therefore instead of an intemperate Mourning at their departure, let us imitate their Examples, and propound their holy Lives and Deaths as our Pattern and Encouragement.

§. 1. **S**ince the Honour of Gods Grace may be very much advanced by our taking notice of the Influence and power of it in Believers : Since to praise and imitate the holy actions of our departed Friends, is almost the only Communion we can now have with them ; and their Example, though they are dead, may yet speak to the Instruction and Comfort of the Living ; I shall conclude with some brief account of that Excellent Person, whose decease gave occasion to our present Meeting.

§. 2. And knowing the usual Flattery of Funeral Orations, I shall pass over the Advantages of her Birth, the Credit of her Family, the Sweetness of her Temper, (the best Soyl for the Fruits of the Spirit ;) and the many other natural and acquired Accomplishments, which rendred her Amiable to all that knew her ; and only mention some Passages, that may either magnifie the Grace of God, or be proper for our imitation and encouragement : And therein shall deliver nothing, but either upon my own knowledge

judge, nor from the particular Account I have received from her nearest Relations, and those Reverend Ministers, who assisted with their Prayers, and Counsel during her Sickness.

S. 3. Through the Blessing of God on a Pious Education, and other means of Grace, and in answer to the fervent Prayers of her Holy Parents, for the fulfilling of Gods Covenant Promise to them and to their seed; we have great reason to believe that she had chosen the Favour of God as her Felicity and End, almost as soon as she was capable of making a deliberate choice.

S. 4. And a Life of Seventeen years, (whereof so great a part is lost by Infancy and Childhood) is certainly very short for the growth and ripening of such fruits of the Spirit as she discover'd. A Time and Age, when Vice and Vanity are wont to blossom and sprout forth in others; When the Thoughts of Death and Judgment are usually rejected, as unwelcome Intruders before their Time; and serious preparation for it deferr'd to a reputed more Convenient Season.

S. 5. But before that Age, her diligent and delightful reading of the Holy Scripture, and valuation of it above other Books, was very admirable and exemplary. Making this Bread of Life her daily food, and tasting such sweetness, and reaping such benefit by it, that even at midnight, while others slept, she would often spend several hours in reading the Bible: Lamenting on her death-bed the loss of Time by other Books; which could not assist her to a bet-

ter understanding of her duty, and the Mind of God, or take off her Affections from the Love of this World, and prepare her Soul for the Heavenly Glory.

§. 6. Notwithstanding this secret serious Piety, her Humility and Modesty was such, as not to make a great noise and show to others, as if the Form of Godliness were the principal, or only thing to be regarded.

§. 7. For several weeks before her last Sickness, she was observ'd less to regard the World than formerly; more Seriously to be devoted to God; and more to dislike vain Company, and idle Talk, especially if it carried with it a Tendency and design to disparage others: and in all respects so to demean her self, as if she had receiv'd some secret Revelation from God, that her Time would be but short, and her change was near.

§. 8. Though before she fell sick, she was fearful enough of that * Disease, whereof she dyed, yet having taken her Bed, and knowing the Distemper, she profess'd her self The small entirely willing to acquiesce in the Will of God. And was displeas'd with any who would have tamper'd with her Face, or discour'd to that purpose.

§. 9. Yea during the whole three weeks of her Sickness, she continued in such a frame; notwithstanding the loathsomeness of the Disease; notwithstanding the Troublesome Prescriptions of Physicians; notwithstanding her own Pains, of which her Constitution, Breeding and Age considered, she

she could not but be very apprehensive. And with an admirable Patience and Resignation to the Will of God, with a great contempt of the Vanities of the World, and an holy Indifference even to Life it self, she desired to Depart: And that not meerly to be eas'd of her Pain, but to be with Christ, and the blessed Society above: or to use her own words, To be with her Heavenly, and her Natural Father: And gave this excellent reason for her desire; Lest if restored to health, she should meet with some prevailing Temptations, that might turn away her Heart from God and Heaven: and therefore she had rather be with Christ, than put it to the Venture.

§. 10. Her Victory over this World was likewise evident by the particular charge she gave to those about her, to let some young Gentlemen of her Acquaintance know from her, how contemptible the best of this World will be, when they come to dye: and entreat them in her Name, (as her last request, and the expression of her special kindness to their Souls) that they would not over-value it.

§. 11. As an instance of her submission to the good pleasure of God, and satisfaction in his order; she desired, that her Mother, and the whole Family might joyn with her in singing the latter part of the 39 Psalm: Ver. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Lord thou didst it. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beau-

beauty to consume away like a Moth. Surely every man is Vanity. Selah, &c. Which she repeated by heart according to the Metre.

§. 12. As an instance of her joyful Hope of Glory in the presence of Christ after death, she made those who attended in her Sickness, frequently to read over the 1 Thes. 4. chap. in the close whereof, the glorious Appearance of Christ to Judgment is set forth; and the Happiness of the Saints describ'd, by being ever with the Lord, with this addition, Wherefore comfort one another with these words. ver. 17, 18.

§. 13. With the free use of her Reason, to the very last, God was pleas'd to give her the great Blessing of a Tender Conscience; and therefore she did not slightly overlook even little Failings without a penitent observation: and some of them such as no man in a judgment of Charity would reckon sinfull. Every thing that look'd like undutifulness to her Mother, she heartily begg'd her Pardon for; though nothing considerable of that kind can be remembred, to make her need forgiveness: thankfully owning the strictness of her Education, the seasonable Reproofs of a discreet Parent, and even the abridgment of that Liberty which other young persons take, (very often to their prejudice and ruine) as a singular advantage and favour from Heaven.

§. 14. In some part of her Sickness, she had some humble becoming doubts and fears of her own state; but having imparted them to a Reverend Person well acquainted in the Family, and
heard

heard his Resolutions and Answers; she was better satisfied, and express'd her hopes of Pardon and Salvation through the Righteousness of Christ; who loved her and washed her from her Sins in his own Blood. Yea so far was she from questioning the goodness of God, and the Truth of his Promise; so far from doubting of the al sufficiency of Christs Mediation, the Merit of his Sacrifice, and his willingness to receive returning Sinners: that the believing thoughts of it were her greatest support and joy; saying often in the time of her Sicknes, That though her Sins were as Scarlet, God could make them as Snow: though red like Crimson, they should be as Wooll. Isa. 1. 18.

§. 15. Moreover, she did thankfully acknowledge the Mercies of God to her, in the former part of her Life: whereof she had very many, both Personal and Relative. And particularly desired, that Thanks might be returned to God for his singular goodness to her during her Sicknes.

§. 16. She was very desirous of Prayer to God on her behalf; and very joyful and well pleased when she had it: and being at any time askt what particular request she desired should be made to God for her; she mention'd not her Recovery and the lengthening of her days; but the forgiveness of Sin through the Merit of her Redeemer; an humble submission to Gods disposal; and a prepared heart to acquiesce in his appointment. And so in one sence she was full of dayes, though she dyed very young: being satiated with the Time she had

had liv'd on Earth; and not importunate for a longer stay.

§. 17. Within a few hours before her dissolution, (of the approach whereof she was more apprehensive than those about her) she was very desirous that a worthy Minister whom she named, might immediately be sent for, to commend her Soul to God: Who accordingly came, thō at Midnight. She her self joyn'd in that last Office, with great seriousness and affection; and afterward return'd him her hearty thanks for his great kindness therein, saying, Now I have nothing more to do, but to dye: Only requested him not to leave the house that night, as knowing, that his Company and Counsel might administer to the support of her Affectionate Mother, and other Relations, whom she should leave in sorrow, thō she her self was passing to Eternal Joy.

§. 18. After which she composed her self to rest, and refused every thing that was offer'd her to take, making Signs with her hands of her unwillingness to be disturbed.

§. 19. In that short space of her Continuance, which was not an hour, she was heard to say, Be gone, Satan! Be gone! Thou art a Liar from the Beginning, and the Father of Lyes. O come Lord Jesus. And soon after she said, He is come, he is come: and so fell asleep, as in the Arms of her dearest Saviour, or as the Jews report of Moses, That he dyed with the Kiss of God.

O Death! where is now thy Sting? O Grave! where is now thy Victory? The sting of

of Death is Sin, and the strength of Sin is the Law : But thanks be to God, who hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ : And blessed are the Dead that Thus dye in the Lord.

§. 20. *Would to God, that the Account here given, might effectually convince us, of the great difference between the Death of the Holy and the Unholy, of the Righteous and the Sinner ! Might convince us of the great Blessing of holy Parents, and a good Education ; and encourage Parents to be diligent and faithfal, to be serious, prudent, and affectionate, in the Education of their Children ; because such a deportment is most likely to be owned by God with the desired Success.*

And Oh that it might Convince us likewise of the Vanity of Youth, the shortness of our Lives, the uncertainty of our Time, the nearness of our Change, the necessity, reasonableness, and manifold advantages of Remembring our Creator in our younger Years ! And withal might hasten our Preparations, and spirit our Desires, to depart and be dissolv'd, whenever God shall call us ! That following their Example, who by Faith and Patience are gone to inherit the Promises, We may at length meet those Precious Souls above, who are gone before us ; that with them, and all the Children of the Kingdom, we may be for ever with the Lord, which is Best of all.

THE END.

is the
given
arist:
n the

here
great
d the
fight
nts,
s to
and
n;
and

Mrs. *SHOWER's*
Funeral Sermon.

he
n-
e,
a-
g-
t-
r-
-
e
t

BY
Mr. JOHN SPADEMAN,
of Rotterdam.

E e

THE CHURCH
Singing and Praying for the Glory

ПОСЛАНИЕ

1901-1902

JOHN L. BARNES

Printed for J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1891.

*Sickness and Death for the Glory
of CHRIST.*

A
Funeral Sermon
ON THE
D E C E A S E
O F
Mrs. *ELIZ. SHOWER.*

Who Dyed the 24th. of *Aug.* 1691.

By JOHN SPADEMAN, *Minister of
the English Church at Rotterdam.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for J. Dunton and A. Chandler. 1691.

THE [illegible] OF [illegible]

BY [illegible]

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

PRINTED BY [illegible]

IN THE YEAR [illegible]

BY [illegible]

AND [illegible]

TO [illegible]

TO

My Honoured Friend,
Mr. S H O W E R.

SIR,

WHen after an unpleasing separation, the Providence of God gave Opportunity of renewing our Converse, in your Habitation; I promis'd my self an unmix'd satisfaction, during my stay with you: And as none is more oblig'd to rejoyce in all the Good, which you, or yours, are partakers of; so none could be more heartily dispos'd to do it. Indeed the hopes of enjoying your Society sweetned the fatigues of a Voyage, which (after many Years absence) I lately made unto my own Countrey: In which I was truly delighted to find, that not only your Person and Ministry were acceptable and useful, but

E c 3

that

The Epistle

that there was a prospect that God would make your House to grow. But when I was preparing to return, I perceived that God had brought me to mourn with you, under a most afflictive Providence: In which though my Character had made me unfit to present Comfort to you; yet few of your Friends had more light to discern the deepness of your Wound, and greatness of your Loss. For the intimate Friendship between us, and our cohabitation in Holland, gave me opportunity of understanding the worth of Her, whom now you lament. Though this Consideration, as it makes your Tryal greater, renders your Resignation more acceptable to God, and useful to Men.

To part with an ordinary Possession with willingness, is a-kin to that Patience which is exercis'd under merited Punishment, which in the Apostles judgment hath no Glory or Commendation in it: (1 Pet. 1. 20.) But 'tis an Heroick Spirit, a resemblance of that Faith which dignifi'd the Father of all who believe, to give up a rare and endearing

Dedictory.

dearing Treasure : And if any Consideration hath strength to work this Noble Disposition in our Souls, that which is taken from the Glory of God, and the Redeemer, hath : 'Twas this which led my thoughts unto the Meditations in the following Discourse, which though much below the dignity of the Subject, am willing to make thus publick, that they may be a lasting Monument of the Gratitude and Respect I owe unto your Deceas'd Consort, and with the Divine Blessing may be useful to those who may be call'd unto like Tryals.

Many of your Brethren would have performed this Service with far more justice unto both the Subjects of the Discourse, than one who is in a journeying State : But when your self, and some near Relatives desir'd this last Office, I was not unwilling to comply ; especially having the advantage of knowing by how singular a Providence your Marriage-Union was brought about, and how happy it was to you both.

I need not tell you how this sorrowful Event makes the thoughts of my intended

The Epistle, &c.

Voyage much more uneasy to me, who
must leave so dear a Friend depriv'd of
his delightful Half: But an Interest in
the whole Duty, (who cannot dye) will
abundantly compensate this loss, which to-
gether with your long continuance in Tem-
ple-Service, and the desirable success of
your Labours, is with utmost earnestness
prayed for, by

London, Sept.

1. 1691.

SIR,

Your Affectionate

Faithful Servant,

J. Spademan.

Dick.

**Sickness and Death for the
Glory of Christ.**

A

Funeral Sermon, &c.

JOHN XI. 4.

When Jesus heard that, he said, This Sickness is not unto Death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

THE first hearing of these Words, which speak of *Sickness* and *Death*, may give some Indication of the sorrowful Occasion, that hath drawn more than usual Numbers unto this *Place*: From which it hath pleas'd the All-wise God to remove *One*, who was a principal Ornament of it; *One* whose constant Attendance, and Christian Deportment in it, carried an exciting Influence unto all who were Witnesses of 'em. And therefore it is no small loss

loss unto this whole Society, that they shall no longer enjoy the advantage of such an Example; but even the privation of such, whose Lives were exemplary, is capable of affording very considerable advantage: As we know that not only the Light of the *Heavenly Bodies*, is useful unto this lower World, their *Eclipses* have their advantages too, which are therefore thought worthy of peculiar Observation. It hath been a received Opinion, that the *Eclipses* of the Sun and Moon have an Instructive signification, by which the Inhabitants of the Earth are warn'd and admonish'd. The Truth of that Opinion hath been question'd, but 'tis certain that the Death of a Christian, who did *shine as a Light in the World*, hath an Instructive Language, and is proper to teach very profitable Lessons unto them who survive. Such Providences do indeed call unto mourning and sorrow, but this is not the principal intention of them: there is something of far greater importance to employ our minds, on such sad occasions, and that is, to receive the Spiritual Instruction that is then presented unto us. It hath been counted an instance of the folly of some superstitious Heathens, that they would make a hideous noise whenever they saw the Sun, or Moon darkned, and variously express'd their fears of losing those Luminaries, but made no useful enquiries into the Causes and Nature of those

Phano.

Phænomena. And 'tis very reproachful unto professing Christians, when they imagine that a passionate sorrow is the only, or chief business that the Death of Christian Friends calls 'em to; Our deportment on such occasions, should correspond with our Christian Hope, which assures us, that they who are fallen asleep in Christ are not lost, (which in the Apostles Judgment is a self-evident absurdity, 1 Cor. 15. 18.) A deceased Christian is not only more safe, but far more happy and honourable than *he* or *she* was in this World: so that they need not our tears; which yet on other accounts are just and reasonable, but they must not hinder our serious enquiries into the Nature and Uses of such a Sorrowful object. When therefore we have lost a living Example in the Deceased Mrs. Shower, we are oblig'd to make such enquiries, with relation unto her Death, that we may get some considerable and lasting advantage from it; and in order unto this, I have thought these words of the Redeemer, spoken upon a like occasion, would afford reasonable Meditations, that may assist us to improve the late sorrowful Providence. And when I have laid down the general Instructions contain'd in 'em, I shall endeavour to apply 'em unto the particular subject of our Sorrow.

To understand the grounds and occasion of the words read to you, we need only look back

back to the few Verses which precede the Text; and in the first verse we find, that a Friend and Favourite of Christ, *Lazarus*, the Brother of *Martha* and *Mary*, is arrested by a threatening Sickness. *The favour and friendship of Christ do not exempt from Sickness and Death.* A *Lazarus* whom Jesus loved, is sick and dieth. His Sisters seem to have concluded, that the affection which Christ had for their Brother, should have secur'd him from these Calamities; and (tis probable) they thought, that nothing but the distance of place could hinder Christ from relieving their Brothers Case, which therefore they take care to acquaint him with, and send this sorrowful Message unto the Redeemer, *Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick*, ver. 3. They choose indeed the fittest Argument to plead on this occasion with Christ, when they represent to him the Interest that their Brother had in his peculiar Affection. They don't say, 'He who is our Brother, and Beloved by us, or he who loveth thy Person, and Service, is sick: They knew, that such Considerations (tho very forcible among men) could have but little weight upon him, who cannot be made a Debtor by all the Kindness and Service that any can express toward him. No, they rightly conclude, that the Redeemers Love is free, and without any Obligation, and must be the only

Ori-

Original of all that Relief, which he at any time bestows. Thus far, I say, these Sisters were in the right; but the particle *Behold!* (which is a Note of Admiration) intimates the Mistake which they were guilty of, and that they were surpris'd at the sickness and danger of their Brother, because he was one whom Jesus loved. Had this been the Case of a *Scribe*, or a *Pharisee* (two Orders which Christ had no kindness for) this would not have appeared strange unto them, as it did, that one whom Christ loved, should languish under a painful and threatening Disease. No question they had often seen and heard the Redeemer expressing a peculiar kindness unto their Brother, whose sickness and danger made him now a Spectacle of Pity: And they knew not how to reconcile these two together, and therefore were inclin'd to hope, that his love unto their Brother (as soon as he had an account of his danger) would induce him to make the greatest haste to visit, and heal him, (both which he had done unto others who were strangers.) But *he* intended to do neither, he determin'd to delay his visit unto *Lazarus*, until he had been four days dead: But tho he would not heal and recover sick *Lazarus*, he sends a most excellent Remedy unto his Sisters, to cure their mistakes, to ease and heal their minds, which was the intention of this Reply unto their Importunate

nate Message. *This sickness is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, &c.*

In which we are called to consider, 1. *The Manner.* 2. *The Design.* 3. *The Imports of this Answer.*

I would make a few Reflections upon the two former, and then shall insist upon the last, as most suitable to our present Affair.

I. As to *the Manner* of this Answer: 'Tis easie to perceive the obscurity and dubiousness of the former part; *This Sickness is not unto Death*: For the Event did (at least) seem to contradict the literal meaning of this Declaration, which expressly denies that the sickness of *Lazarus* was unto Death, and yet *Lazarus* dyeth: This seeming contradiction, must render this part of the Answer dubious and dark, unto those to whom it was sent. Indeed notwithstanding this obscurity, there was a most certain Truth in this part of the Answer, which speaks of such a *Death*, as truly answers that Character, viz. Such a Privation of Life, as puts a final Period unto it; on which account it can truly be said of the Dead, *That their places know 'em no more, and that they go the way whence they shall not return*: Job 8. 10. c. 16, 22. As also, *That they see corruption*, Acts 13. 36. The Body quite losing that Organization, that makes it a fit Habitation for a humane Soul: This is the primary and proper notion of Death, and under which the Spirit of God speaks

speaks of it: (See *Rom.* 5. 12, 14. *1 Cor.* 15. 21, 26, 54, 56. Not to mention several other places.) Unto *such a Death* the sickness of *Lazarus* was not; his Death was not a final Period, but only a short interruption or cessation of Life, which (like some Rivers which run under ground for a space) only for a while disappear'd, and then was again brought to light. This being granted, we cannot deny, that there is some darkness in the manner of expression. Had it so pleased the Redeemer, he could have spoken in a much plainer Language, he could have said, 'Tho' this sickness shall deprive *Lazarus* of his Life, yet it shall soon be restored to him again; tho' he shall truly die, yet he shall not long remain under the power of Death; for I design to work a Miracle to raise him from the dead: Thus could the Redeemer have expressed himself, had it so pleased him, but he chooseth to speak obscurely not only to these Sisters, but afterward to his Apostles, when he said, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth*, v. 11. Which Metaphorical and dark way of speaking led them into a mistake, as we read v. 13. Many other instances of this kind might be produc'd, as that which this Evangelist relateth *Ch.* 16. 16, 17, 18. And as the Language, so the Carriage of Christ hath obscurity in it; his *ways are unsearchable, and his footsteps are not known*, both with respect unto visible Providences, and invisible dealings with the Soul. Ma-

Many there are whom Christ really loveth, who walk in darkness, are brought into a kind of a Labyrinth, where they are strangely perplexed, and are tempted to conclude, that their Lord hath quite forsaken, and cast 'em off, when he retains the kindest and most gracious purposes toward 'em. As God did toward *Abraham* when he commanded him to go out of his Countrey, and yet did not acquaint him with the Place which was design'd to be his Inheritance, *Heb. 11. 8.* Thus was *Abraham* try'd, and so are the Children of *Abraham*; as indeed this conduct of God is admirably suited unto the state of Probation in which we now are. All that darkness and perplexity which at any time we are brought into, are design'd by God, to try and discover the sincerity and constancy of our obedience. And 'tis our grand concern to stand out this Tryal, to undergo this Probation aright; and then whatever darkness there is now in the dealings of Christ, he will after a while scatter every Cloud, and will be an everlasting Light unto us. 'Twere easie to make large Reflections upon this Subject, but your own Meditation can supply this defect; Nor may I dwell long upon the

II. Observable in the Text: The Design of this Answer made by Christ, which was to afford present Support unto the dejected Sisters of *Lazarus*. He whose Eye discerns the most

for the Glory of Christ.

61

most hidden and distant Objects, knows how their tender Hearts were disquieted; and that such a Spectacle as a deceased dying Brother must wound and afflict their Souls; and the more, when their Expectations were disappointed, as to the speedy visit of Christ. 'What! (might they be apt to argue) not make so *charitable*, so *seasonable* a Visit, to one whom he loveth, to one who needs his help, and must perish without it? Is this Kindness, to neglect a distressed Friend, till Life and all be gone? Such disquieting Thoughts would begin to rush into, and disorder their Minds: Now 'twas to still this Tempest, that the Redeemer sends this Reply to 'em. *This Sickness is not unto Death, but for the Glory of God, &c. q. d.* 'Though the Danger and Progress of this Sickness, joyn'd with my seeming Neglect of their Brother, will be an Occasion of Trouble unto them; Sorrow and Fear will take hold of their Spirits, yet let not their Hearts be troubled, there is no just ground of disquieting Fear; notwithstanding the dismal Appearances, this Matter will have a happy and honourable Issue. *When our Lord Jesus doth not grant the expected Relief, yet he always provides Support and Consolation for his faithful Followers.* When He determin'd to send away the Multitudes who had followed him into the Wilderness, he resolves that he will not send 'em away fasting, lest they should faint by the way,

F f

Mat.

Mat. 16. 32. Though they must for a time be deprived of his Presence, yet he takes care, that they might not faint and perish. This was his Carriage toward his Apostles in general, and more particularly toward the Apostle *Paul*, who when he besought the Lord thrice that the Messenger of Satan might depart from him; tho' this Request was not granted, tho' the Thorn in the Flesh was not removed, yet this most supporting Answer was given to him, *My grace is sufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. Sometimes the Carriage of Christ bears an Aspect of Unkindness and Neglect; but even at such a time, his Heart is fill'd with Love, and his Hand is employ'd to Support. 'Tis worthy our notice, what care the Spirit of God hath taken to remove the Suspicion of Unkindness in the Redeemer, toward his Friend *Lazarus*, whom he refus'd to Visit and Recover, as his Sisters requested and expected; for in the Verse which immediately follows this Answer of Christ, the Evangelist adds this cautioning Remark, *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her Sister, and Lazarus*. His not complying with their intimated Desire (of having their Brother speedily Recover'd) did not proceed from Unkindness, or want of Affection (tho' there was appearance of them.) No, he bore the same Love unto a sick and dying *Lazarus*, as if he had wrought a Miracle to prevent his Sickness and Death. 'Twere
casie

ease to enlarge upon this Head; but I must proceed unto the

III. And Principal Observable in the Text, The *Import* and *Sence* of this *Answer*: And if it be remembred that the Sicknes of *Lazarus* was Mortal, there will be found these two General Propositions contain'd in it:

I. *The Sicknes and Death of those who are the Friends of Christ do bring a peculiar Glory unto God, and the Redeemer.*

II. *This one Consideration is sufficient to quiet and support the Followers of Christ under those sorrowful Providences.*

I need not spend time to prove how evidently these Truths are contain'd in this Answer of Christ: which though given in a particular Case, yet carrieth such a general Instruction, as reacheth unto Christians in all Ages of the World. 'Tis granted, that there were singular Circumstances that attended the Sicknes and Death of *Lazarus*, and a most glorious Miracle was wrought, in raising him from the Dead: But notwithstanding there are other grounds which justify the general Conclusions which are drawn from the words. In which 'tis manifest (as has been observ'd) our Lord design'd to quiet and ease the troubled Minds of *Lazarus's* Sisters, who had now a sorrowful Prospect of losing a beloved Brother. And in order to this, he thought it enough (without mentioning his miraculous Raising from the Dead) only to

inform them, That the threatenng Sickness of their Brother was *for the glory of God, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* This one Consideration, when it finds due Entertainment in, and hath a right Operation upon a believing Soul, is able to still all the disquieting Motions that Sorrow and Fear have raised there.

I have not design'd a distinct handling of these Two Propositions; 'twill be as useful to joyn both together in a plain and instructive Method: And therefore shall,

1. Give a short Account of the *Glory* of God and Christ.

2. Shew how the *Sickness* and *Death* of those who are the Friends of Christ does contribute unto it.

3. On what Accounts the Consideration of this hath such a *quieting* and *supporting Influence* upon a Christian; and afterward draw some instructive *Inferences* from these memorable words. As to the

1. The Nature of that *Glory* which belongs unto God and Christ: On which I shall only make a very few Remarks, because it may be hoped that few Christians are unacquainted with this common Subject.

Glory, in its general Idea, or Notion, is nothing but some great Excellence manifested and acknowledged; whence 'tis that it makes so very strong an Impression upon Intelligent Creatures, and the desire of it, hath

hath so universal an Influence. More particularly,

1. The Glory of God is the Manifestation of the great and adorable *Excellencies* which are in the *Deity*, both absolutely and relatively considered. When the *Virtues* (as the *Greek Expression* is, 1 *Pet.* 2. 10.) of God are shown forth, so as to be acknowledg'd and esteemed by his Creatures: When his inflexible Justice, and spotless Purity, his unsearchable Wisdom, and infallible Truth, his Almighty Power, and inexhaustible Goodness do shine forth, and are set in a just Light, then the Glory of God appears in open view, *Numb.* 14. 21. God sweareth that *all the Earth should be filled with the Glory of the Lord*; because he intended to display his Justice and Holiness, in punishing and consuming the murmuring *Israelites*. Thus 'tis said, *Psal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord buildeth up Zion, he shall appear in his Glory*, because that Work would manifest the Power and Veracity of God.

2. The Glory of Christ, is, the shewing forth that *Excellence* which belongs unto his *Mediatory Office*; accordingly, when he wrought his first Miracle at *Cana*, he is said to have *manifested forth his Glory*, *Joh.* 2. 11. All the Evidences which bear Witness unto his Priestly, or Regal, or Teaching Offices, do glorifie the Redeemer, 2 *Pet.* 1. 17.

3. It must be remembred, that the *Glory* of the *Deity*, is distinct from that of the *Redeemer*; yet they are never separated from, much less opposed unto each other. 'Tis otherwise, as to the *Glory* of God, and of a *Creature*; these do often disagree and clash against each other. When *Herod* accepted an undue Honour from a flattering Crowd; this took away the Honour that was due unto God, Acts 12. 23. but the Honour that is given unto *Christ*, doth bring *Glory* unto God, Joh. 17. 1. These two are so inseparably joyn'd together, that they can never be put asunder. Let us now enquire,

2. How the *Sickness* and *Death* of those who are the Friends of *Christ*, do bring *Glory* unto God and the Redeemer: While our Eye is fixt only upon the dark side (or Superficies) of this Object, we shall be tempted to put such a Question as once *Nathanael* did concerning *Nazareth*, Joh. 1. 46. Can any good thing come from such Evil? Can so barren a Soil produce such precious Fruit as the *Glory* of God? Can this dark and dismal Cloud send forth such a refreshing Light? At the first view it seems dishonourable unto God, when these Bodies, which are his Temples, are demolish'd and laid in the Dust: This, I say, seems a disparagement unto him who rais'd and dwelt in 'em, When these pleasant Plants which stood in the Courts of God are overturn'd, this seems

a damage unto the Heavenly Husbandman : But notwithstanding these Objections of Sense, 'tis undeniably true, that the Sickness and Dissolution of Christians, do really contribute unto the Glory of God and Christ : The Evidences which confirm this, do relate both unto those Christians who are remov'd by Death, and unto those who survive.

1. With respect unto the Dying Friends of Christ themselves : Their *Sickness* and *Death* do many ways bring Glory unto God and the Redeemer.

1. The Divine *Veracity* or *Truth* is glorified by executing the Primitive Sentence, which hath been given against all the Posterity of fallen *Adam*, *Gen. 3. 19. Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return.* A peculiar Glory redounds unto God, when these Declarations which signifie his Council and Purpose are punctually accomplisht. (As on the contrary, nothing is more dishonourable in its own Nature than *Falshood*, which is counted, even by Lyars themselves, an intolerable Reproach.) Compare *Num. 14. ver. 21.* with *ver. 35.* The Death of every Christian doth seal unto the Truth of God.

2. The Divine *Holiness*, and hatred of Sin, are honour'd by the *Sickness* and *Death* of those Christians who have provok'd the Anger of God, though they die in Peace. We have memorable Instances in *Moses*, in *Josiah*, and the *Corinthian* Christians ; some of

whom were cut off by Death, though not Cōdemned with the World, 1 Cor. 11. 30, 32. Concerning *Moses*, we read, that by his unadvised Language he offended God : At one time he complain'd of his Service and Burthen, and desired rather to *die*, than *bear it any longer*, Num. 11. 14, 15. At another time he spoke with indecent Passion unto the *Israelites*; and then God pronounc'd the *Arrest* which you read, Num. 20. 12. That he should not bring the *Israelites* into the *Promised Land*. Now the executing of that Sentence did glorifie God, because it manifested his Holiness, which could not behold the defiling Blemishes that were in *Moses*; who was one of the most eminent Favourites of God.

3. The Divine Sovereignty and Dominion are honour'd by the Obedience and Resignation of Sick and Dying Believers ; When a Christian exercises that Submission unto the Orders of God, that he willingly drinks the bitterest Cup which his Father gives him; how Honourable must this be unto God ! This last act of Obedience Crowns the whole Christian course : certainly there is no Spectacle more grateful unto God, than a Christian chearfully yielding back his Soul unto him who gave it : 'Twas a resigning Obedience that rendred the Death of Christ a *Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour* unto God, who was in a most eminent manner glorified by it ; Though a Dying Christian cannot
offer

offer an Attoning Sacrifice, yet he is a kind of *Holocaust*, when his Death is perfum'd with a chosen Submission unto the disposing Will of God. On this Account *the Death of the Saints*, (or as the *Hebrew* word imports) *the Favourites, is precious in the sight of the Lord*, Psal. 116. 15.

4. The *Powerful Grace of Christ* is honour'd by the inward support and refreshment which sick and dying Christians receive from him; at a time when the *Daughters of Musick are brought low*, and all the Pleasures of Life are without relish; then to feel an invigorating strength which renews the inner Man, when the outer decays, and is falling down; this magnifieth the powerful Grace of God, *who giveth power to the Faint; and to them that have no Might, encreaseth Strength*, Isa. 40. 29. A Principle of Natural Courage will afford some Support; but 'tis Divine Grace alone which can enable a Christian to triumph over the Pain and Danger of a Mortal Sicknes, 2 Cor. 5. 6.

5. Especially God and Christ are glorified in the *Victory* which a Christian gains over Death: This last Enemy is a very Formidable one. An *Alexander*, who could Encounter the vast Armies of *Asian* Monarchs, who had despised the Terroure of Battels, in his last Sicknes was so afraid of Death, that his Court was fill'd with Diviners and Victims, and all imaginable Methods were try'd to preserve

preserve his Life. When therefore a Christian, though of the tender, fearful Sex, is raised above the Fear of Death, is *confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord*, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 6. 5. This doth highly Honour the Grace and Power of the Redeemer, through whom alone it is that *a Christian is more than a Conqueror*, Rom. 8. 36, 37.

6. The Redeemer is glorified in that *Blessedness* which he immediately confers upon the Souls of his deceased Friends. No sooner had the *Israelites* pass'd the *Red Sea*, and got upon free Land, but they send up their joyful Praises, and mention how gloriously God had Triumphed over their Enemies: What Heart can conceive the Songs of Praise which Celebrate the Lamb, and him who sits upon the Throne, when one believing Soul is set free from the House of Bondage, and transplanted into the Heavenly Countrey? when a Soul that is Imprison'd and Fetter'd in a House of Clay, is received into the heavenly Habitations which the Redeemer hath prepared? Surely, if those who heard of the Conversion of *Paul*, glorified God in him, or on his account; those who were Witnesses and Spectators of a far more surprizing Change, could not be wanting in their Admiration and Praises of that God who Crowns with unfading Glory.

7. The Death of a Christian brings glory unto

unto the Redeemer, as it is the Occasion of that astonishing Operation, which will raise the dissolved Body, and transform it into the likeness of his own most glorious Body. The final Conquering of the last Enemy, must be exceeding glorious unto that Power which effects it. The Raising of *Lazarus*, and reinstating his Body in a perishing Life, did glorifie the Redeemer; and this he had his Eye upon in making this Answer: What then must be the Raising of a Corrupted Body unto a blessed Immortality? By which the Children of the Resurrection are made like the Angels of God: Read and consider that memorable passage, *2 Thes. 1. 10.* Let us now briefly reflect upon the

2. Evidence which I propounded, viz. How the *Sickness* and *Death* of Christians glorifie God, with respect unto them who survive, whether they be more nearly or distantly related. And

1. God is thus glorified on such Occasions, because he manifests his Divine Power in compensating and supplying that Loss. When useful and serviceable Christians are removed by Death, nothing but Almighty Power can fill up such a void empty space, and raise up others to carry on his Work; so that the Church resembles that Poetical Tree, in which as fast as one Branch was broken off, another did spring in the same place; Thus when *Moses* dies, God finds

a *Joshua* who was qualified to succeed him: When a *David* is laid unto his Father's, and sees Corruption, God fills his Throne with a *Solomon*.

2. The Exercises of Graces in surviving Relatives or Acquaintance, doth glorifie God on such Occasions. When holy *Job*, upon the surprizing Death of all his Children (at the same time) doth Adore the Sovereignty of God, and blesseth his Name, when he took his dearest Comforts away; this did effectually refute the reproaching Accusation of Satan, and brought a singular Honour to God; who is also

3. *Glorified* in the Comforting of those who are troubled and cast down by such Providences: This is one glorious Character of the blessed God, *That he comforteth those who are cast down*, 2 Cor. 7. 6. Did not his Hand bind up the Wound, no other could do it; all the Consolations which a Creature can present, are weak and ineffectual things; but the supports of the heavenly Comforter are never more sensible than under the sense of afflictive Providences, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4. In the

4. And Last place, The *Sickness* and *Death* of Christians bring Glory unto God, as they are serviceable unto the Souls of them who survive: As those Fruits that fall from the Tree, and lye about it, make the Soyl more fruitful; such sorrowful Providences being excellent Instructions about our Duty, and powerful

powerful Arguments to excite us unto our great Work : What the Apostle saith concerning his *Bonds*, was equally true concerning his *Death* : They were *for the furtherance of the Gospel*, Phil. 1. How many have owed their Conversion and Establishment unto the *Counsels* and *Examples* of dying Christians ? The Histories of every Church abound with such Instances. I should now have shewed,

3. On what accounts this Consideration is sufficient to *Quiet* and *Support* a Christian under such sorrowful Providences : Of this I shall give this Threefold Account.

1. That *Love* which a Christian bears unto God and Christ, makes their Honour dearer unto him than any Interest of his own ; and consequently, the advancing of that will sweeten all the Crosses that can oppress him. When *Jephtha's* Victory over the *Amonites* had got him more than ordinary Honour ; this was so pleasing to his Daughter, that she was willing to endure the harsh Effects of her Father's Vow, *Judg. 10. 36*. Such a temper there was in the Apostle, when he could declare that his chief Expectation and Design was, that Christ might be magnified in his Body, whether by Life or Death, *Phil. 1. 20*.

2. A Christian knows that when God and Christ are glorified, then the grand *Purpose* and *End* of God are attained : We are sure that the blessed God cannot design any Gain or Profit to himself in his Actings, but his design

design is to get himself Glory; and it must be very delightful unto God, when this Council of God is accomplish'd.

3. A Christian obtains his own chief *Request* when God is glorified; all his other Petitions are subordinate unto this: He remembers that the Hallowing or Glorifying of God's Name stands in the very first place in that Exemplar Prayer which Christ hath left unto the Church; and therefore when God doth glorifie himself, though in a way that is grievous unto the Humane Nature, yet a Christian Rejoyceth. And now it were easie to draw many instructive Inferences from this Answer made by Christ: As,

1. It will follow from hence, that the surprizing Death of the most holy and useful Persons, is no Objection against the Providence and Government of God. 'Twas usual among the Heathens to Accuse their Gods; yea, some of 'em proceeded to deny the Existence and Providence of a *Deity*, because some *excellent* and *vertuous* Persons were taken away by a surprizing Death. The *Epicurean*, who disputes against *Providence*, thought his Queries unanswerable, when he ask'd, Why (if there was a Providence) the two brave *Scipio's* were Routed and Slain by the *Carthaginians*, with several such like Questions, which were more tolerable in the Gentiles who knew not God; but it is *inexcusable*

Cicer. de
N. D. l. 3.

sable in those who have the Oracles of God committed unto them, to think or speak at such a rate.

2. What adorable Wisdom belongs unto the blessed God, who can glorifie himself by those very events that seem most dishonourable unto him: 'Tis observed by the Apostle, that *the foolishness of God is wiser than men*, 1 Cor. 1. 25. i. e. In those very events which seem inconsistent with Wisdom, wherein God seems to act foolishly, yet in them he (infinitely) surpasses all the skill and Wisdom that are in men. The Divine Wisdom can build Trophies upon those very places which seem to swallow it up: The cutting off the natural Branches, the casting away the Body of the Jewish Nation, at the first view appear'd dishonourable unto the Truth and Fidelity of God; but the consideration of this event draws from the Apostle that admiring Exclamation, *Rom. 11. v. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*

3. How vast is the distance between the Thoughts of God, and those of Men! *Isa. 55. 8.* The subject of the Text gives a memorable instance: The Sisters of *LAZARUS* might be apt to conclude that their Brothers Sicknes and Death would be on various accounts dishonourable unto Christ: 1. As they seemed to import Unkindness, or Impotence in Christ, who on this occasion

ſion carry'd it, as if he either neglected his Friend, or was unable to help him : And
 2. As they ſeem'd to argue the unprofitableneſs of Chriſts Service. When *Lazarus* was Dead and laid in his Grave, thoſe who knew the Friendſhip of the Redeemer unto him, would be tempted to ſpeak on this manner : “ How little advantage hath
 “ poor *Lazarus* got by his Acquaintance
 “ with, and ſervice unto Chriſt, who if he
 “ had Power to Recover and prevent the
 “ Death of his Sick Friend, has been guilty of ſtrange unkindneſs. But in the concluſion, the Sickneſs and Death of *Lazarus* did bring a far greater Honour unto Chriſt, than his recovering would have done : That Miracle which was wrought in raiſing him from the Dead, did exalt the Name of Chriſt, and encreaſed the number of his Followers ; take heed therefore of leaning unto your own underſtanding, but whereſoever the ways of God have a perplexing obſcurity in them, imitate the Practice of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 73. 17. Go into the Sanctuary, and view them in Scripture light ; this will diſcover a reſreſhing brightneſs in thoſe Events which have the moſt horror in them.

4. How real and great a difference doth Converting Grace make between a Chriſtian, and the unbelieving World ! The latter are wholly inſenſible unto the conſiderati-

on

On us'd in the Text; the glory of God and Christ have no efficacy to quiet and support their minds; Arguments taken from their own Reputation or Interest, have some force to moderate Sorrow and keep it from excess; but the glorifying of God by their Crosses, is an Argument which hath no strength with them; whereas it hath the greatest with a Christian, to whom nothing else need be represented: Our Saviour well understood to whom he made the Answer in the Text; they were his sincere Disciples, who were capable of perceiving the force of this Consideration; which afterward our Saviour repeats unto *Martha*, v. 40. *Thou shouldst see the glory of God*; Unto a *Martha* this would be a grateful and transporting spectacle, when a *Judas* had far rather see thirty pieces of Silver, (than this glory of God.) Let us try our selves by this Rule; this will discover our State and our Character, and whether our Patience under Tryals be a Christian Grace, or but a Philosophick Virtue; this latter groweth from other Principles; when therefore our Minds are quieted under dejecting Providences, without having recourse unto the support of the Text, 'tis a sad evidence that we are alienated from the Life of God: If the consideration of his Glory cannot over-balance the Pain and Loss that we are expos'd to, we are very

unlike to our Redeemer, whose troubled Soul was compos'd with this Thought, that his Fathers Name would be glorified by his accurs'd Death, *John* 12. 27, 28.

3. Let us whom this sorrowful occasion hath drawn together (and all who but hear of it) give diligence to correspond with the design that God hath in this severe Providence: Surely he hath not made this breach, only to open a passage unto Sorrow and Compassion, much less to furnish us with new matter of discourse: No, he designs that we should glorifie him in our Hearts and Lives, more than we have formerly done: And this leads me unto that *particular Application* which I propounded to spend some time in, and which will assist us in making that Improvement of this Providence as will bring glory unto God. All that I shall add will fall under these following Directions.

1. Let us justifie this severe Providence of God: 'Tis highly dishonourable unto him when we blame and accuse his ways, as if they were not equal; as on the other hand 'tis Honourable to God, when we subscribe every *Arrest* that our Heavenly Judge hath pronounc't. 'Tis related concerning *Aaron*, that when his two Sons were cut off, he held his peace, *Lev.* 10. 2, 3. He made no Objections against that tremendous severity of God, when he understood that He had

had glorified himself by that Act. Blessed be God who enableth the *Relict* of the Deceas'd thus to glorify God: May this Instance of his Resignation very much exalt the Name of God, and bring Reputation unto strict and serious Religion. Let this conclusion be deeply fix'd in all our Souls; that however severe the dealings of God are, they are always Righteous and Equal.

2. Let us Honour and Imitate the Holy Example of the Deceas'd Friend of Christ, the worthy Mrs. *Shomer*. None I hope will expect a large Historical account of her Life, or a Funeral Encomiastick; this latter she needs not, for her own Works praise her in the gate, and are a more valuable Monument, than any made by Art.

Her *Parentage* and *Beauty*, her *Wis* and *Charms* of Conversation (tho' even those were Gifts from above) must now be pass'd over in silence; for all these are *Prada Mortu*, a Prey unto Death and the Grave; which consideration ought to cure the undue Esteem of them, that many professing Christians discover; and perhaps, few places are more guilty of this *Unchristian Error*, than this City, where it seems to be the chief Ambition of many, to out-vye others in every thing, rather than in real Holiness, which is the only Ornament that Death cannot spoil us of; accordingly I shall only take notice of those Excellencies

which do fit the dignifying Character of *Lazarus* unto her, *One whom Jesus loved*. (And however useful and honourable the Love of our Acquaintance and Fellow-creatures may be unto us, yet at last this Character of Sick and Dying *Lazarus* will be more valued, than any the most admir'd Titles of Honour.) To make good this Character, it will not be necessary to Describe her in her Personal and Relative Capacities; in both which, those who knew Her will acknowledge that she had not many Equals, 'Twill be enough to draw the few following Lineaments.

1. The Holy Wisdom which did shine in her Conduct, and which she discover'd, both in leaving her Native Land, to enjoy the advantages of Living in a Religious Family (to which she was related,) and in the Choice that she made when she changed her Condition: Neither the prejudices of the Age, or the Advantage of other offers, could hinder from accepting *One*, as the Partner of her Life, from whom she could expect the best assistance in the Service of God, and the concerns of her Soul; and this she did at a time when there was no prospect of that Tranquility, which now encourageth Persons of his Character and Profession.

2. Her Conscientious Attendance upon the Publick Worship: Of this I am capable to give Witness, having had the opportuni-

ky of Living a considerable time under the same Roof, and have observ'd how Her Love unto the Solomn Assemblies, made Her overcome many difficulties, which are pleaded by others in excuse of their neglect; neither the Heat or Cold of the Season, nor the hazard to her Health, (especially when great with Child) could induce her to lose any Opportunity of waiting at the Gates of Wisdom; such Advantages were pleasant, and such Seasons were refreshing unto her Soul.

3. The Acquaintance she had with Secret Religion: She was not one of those Professors who shut up their Religion within the Temple Walls, where they take it up, and leave it at their departure: No, she made many secret Visits unto her Heavenly Bridegroom, and from him obtain'd that Wisdom and Modesty, and other Virtues which adorn'd her Conversation.

4. Her submission unto the disposing Will of God, and the comforting hopes she had, do compleat the Character of one whom Jesus Loved in this World, and hath now receiv'd in the other, where she is plac'd out of the reach of Sin and Sorrow, of Child-bearing Pains, and Child-bed Sickness, and where no Clouds shall ever interrupt the Light of God, and of the Lamb: But if we desire to meet her there, we must imitate her Faith and Holiness: And

3. Lastly, Let us glorifie God by receiving the Instruction which this sorrowful Providence presents to us.

1. Concerning the *Uncertainty of Life*; when so bright and Vigorous a Flame is suddenly Extinguish'd, who can entertain a just expectation of a long Life? What folly must it be to reckon upon many years, when our Lives are in so perpetual hazard? Let us *number our days aright*, and fix upon our Hearts that Conclusion which David made, 1 Chron. 29. 18. *Our days on the Earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding*; which consideration had no question a strong influence upon that famous Liberality toward the Service of God, which is related in that Chapter; and it would make us more active in his Service.

2. Learn the *Vanity of Creature-assistances*; could the Love of a Husband, or the Counsels of Physicians, or the Service of Friends have been Effectual, there had not been an occasion for this sorrowful Solemnity. 'Tis become Natural to us, to place an undue confidence in Created helps; exceeding apt we are to trust in Riches or Wisdom, and in the means of Health, when in themselves they are empty and broken Cisterns, which will send us away disappointed and asham'd.

3. The necessity of speedy *Preparation for Death and Judgment*; every Funeral prefieth this

this upon those who are witnesses of it. Many of you have lately heard * the Nature and Importance of this great work, and so many have discoursed concerning it, that I need not enlarge: It hath not been without a design worthy of the Wisdom of God, that our Deceas'd Friend should not be called out of the World by Death, until she was known unto two Societies in this City, whereby her Death is rendred more Instructive. And now that a Funeral Sermon hath drawn Multitudes to attend here, you will receive no advantage from it, yea 'twill prove very hurtful to you, if you do not seriously engage, that you will give all diligence to prepare for Death and Eternity. This work is never unseasonable, and nothing can be pleaded to excuse the neglect of it.

You who are *Young*, and in the Flower of your days, do not put off this Affair; say not as the negligent *Jews* once did concerning the Rebuilding of their Temple, *The time is not come*, Hag. 1. 2. The approach of Death will make you of another mind, when you hear the sound of that Messengers Feet, who will bring you to Judgment; you will then conclude that this is the *one Thing necessary*, that all the Concerns

cerns of Trade, and Offices of Civility, are meer Trifles in comparison with the work, upon which your everlasting Welfare depends. What meanest thou then, *O Sleeper* ! arise and call upon God, and stir up thy self that thou perish not ; look often down into the Chambers of the Grave ; dwell (by solemn Thoughts) in the Valley of the Shadow of Death ; Be not afraid lest this should make thee Melancholly or Distracted, for this path leads unto the most desirable Joy. Tho no Distractedness is to be feared, in comparison of the *Madness* which unrepenting careless Sinners are guilty of, and whom Death will find unprepared. And when a view of your Latter End has compos'd and awaken'd your Souls, then put the Question to your selves, which you find 2 Pet. 3. 2. *Seeing that all these things shall be Dissolved, (or are Dissolving,) what manner of Persons ought we to be, in all manner of Conversation and Godliness ?*

FINIS.

Books lately Printed.

P*ractical Discourses on Sickness and Recovery in several Sermons, as they were lately preached in a Congregation in London: by Timothy Agers, M. A. after his Recovery from a Sickness of near two years Continuance.*

Early Religion, or a Discourse of the Duty and Interest of Youth, by the same Author. Both Printed for J. Duncanson.

of the